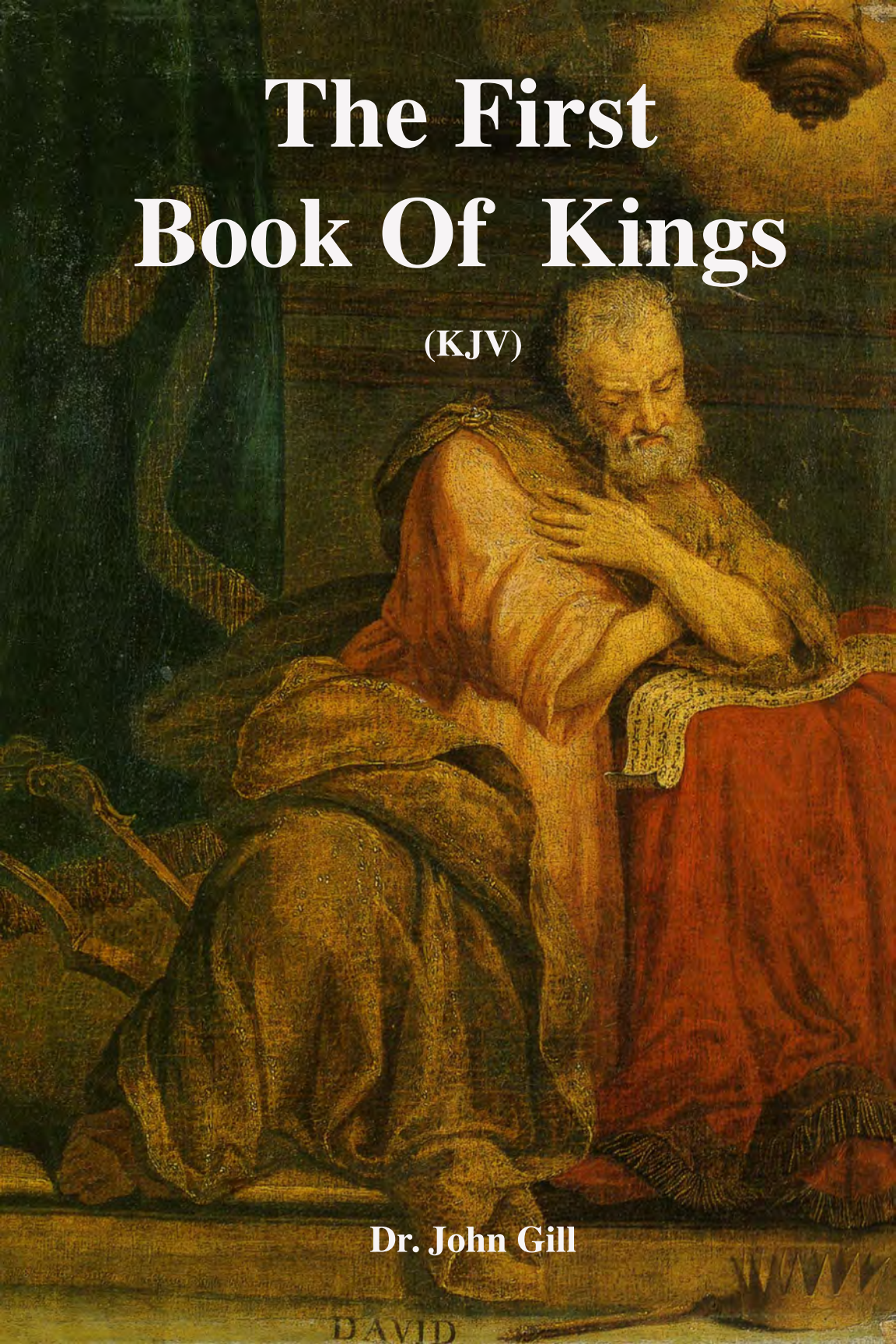


The First Book Of Kings

(KJV)

Dr. John Gill

DAVID



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CHAPTER - INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 1

Dr. John Gill

This chapter gives an account of the infirmities of David in his old age, and the method used to relieve him under them, (1 Kings 1:1-4); of the preparation his son Adonijah made to usurp the throne, (1 Kings 1:5-10); of Bathsheba's address to the king upon it, in favour of her son Solomon, on which she was put by, Nathan the prophet, and seconded in it by him, (1 Kings 1:11-27); when the king with an oath confirmed the succession of Solomon in the kingdom, and ordered Nathan the prophet, and Zadok the priest, to anoint him, which was accordingly done with great ceremony, to the satisfaction of the king and his servants, (Kings 1:28-40); the news of which being brought to Adonijah and his friends, struck them with terror, and on which they dispersed, (1 Kings 1:41-50); and upon the promise of Adonijah, that he would behave well to Solomon, he was pardoned and dismissed, having fled and lain hold on the horns of the altar, (1 Kings 1:51-53).

Ver. 1 . Now King David was old, [and] stricken in years , etc.] Was seventy years of age; for he was thirty years of age when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years, (2 Samuel 5:4); this was just the age of man, (Psalm 90:10); and they covered him with clothes ; not wearing apparel, but bed clothes; he seems to have been bedridden and paralytic: but he got no heat ; by them; having no natural heat in him, clothes could not communicate any to him, only keep the cold from him, (see Haggai 1:6); there are many persons at the age he was, that are lively, healthful, and robust, comparatively speaking at least; but David's strength was impaired, and his natural force abated by his many wars, fatigues by night and day in campaigns, and the many sorrows and afflictions he met with from his family and his friends, as well as enemies; which exhausted his natural moisture, weakened his nerves, and drank up his spirits, and brought upon him the infirmities of a decrepit old age very soon. Ver. 2 . Wherefore his servants said unto him , etc.] His physicians; so Joseph's physicians are called his servants, (Genesis 50:2); let there be sought for my lord the king a young virgin ; not only a young woman, but a virgin, that has more natural heat than women that have bore children have, which is abated thereby: and let her stand before the king : minister to him, serve him with whatsoever he should want to eat or drink; and so by being in his presence, and taking things at her hand, she might be the more ingratiated into his affections: and let her cherish him ; as the husband the wife, so

she her husband, as doubtless David was; and that by giving him cordials to cheer his spirits, and everything that was convenient for him, and particularly by lying with him. Kimchi interprets the word of her being profitable to him, in which sense the word is used, (Job 22:2 35:3); that is, by warming him; Ben Gersom understands it of her being made mistress of his treasures, according to the sense of the word in (Isaiah 22:15); that she might have the command of his purse, and provide anything proper for him, without being taken notice of or obstructed; but the Targum is better, “and let her be near him,” lie close unto him, and even in his bosom, as in the next clause: and let her lie in his bosom ; which shows that it was proposed that he should marry her, at least that she should become his concubine wife, since this phrase is descriptive of a wife, (Micah 7:5); nor can it be thought his physicians would advise, or he agree to have a young woman admitted to his bed, without marriage; and if this had not been the case, it would not have answered the design of Adonijah in requesting her in marriage after his father’s death, which was to make way to ascend the throne when opportunity should offer; nor would his request have been so much resented by Solomon as it was, (1 Kings 2:17-24); that my lord the king may get heat : and somewhat similar to this, Galen, that great physician, prescribed in like cases f4 .

Ver. 3 . So they sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel , etc.] Not only a damsel, but a beautiful one, that she might be the more acceptable to the king; who otherwise, if deformed and ugly, would not have endured her in his sight, or received at her hands, and much less suffered her to lie in his bosom: and found Abishag a Shunammite ; a native of the city Shunem, a city in the tribe of Issachar, (Joshua 19:18); and brought her to the king ; for his approbation of her, and to make her his concubine wife, as he did.

Ver. 4 . And the damsel [was] very fair , etc.] And so very agreeable to the king to be in his presence, and wait upon him, and take things of her hand, as well as lie with him: and cherished the king ; enlivened his spirits by her amiable countenance, her graceful behaviour, and tender care of him, and especially by bedding with him: and ministered to him ; serving him with her own hands whatever he took for his sustenance: but the king knew her not ; as a man knows his wife; which shows that she was his wife, and that it would not have been criminal in him had he known her; but this is observed, not to point at the chastity of David, but his feebleness, and loss of desire after women, and that the damsel remained

a virgin; and that was the ground of Adonijah's request, and his hope of succeeding.

Ver. 5 . Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself , etc.] This was his mother's name, (2 Samuel 3:4); his father David being old and infirm, and not like to live long, notable to oppose him; and he being the eldest son, and a comely person, was inspired with ambition to set up for king: saying, I will be king ; though he knew that Solomon was appointed of God, and promised by David, and expected by the people to be king, yet he was resolved to set up himself for king, and try if he could not get himself to the throne; on this he was bent and determined: and he prepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him ; just as Absalom had done, when he had the same thing in view, to make him respectable among the people, (see 2 Samuel 15:1). Ver. 6 . And his father had not displeased him at any time , etc.] Always humoured him in everything, let him have his own way and will, and granted him what he desired, and never corrected him for his faults, or made him ashamed, as the Targum, by telling him of them, and chastising him for them; this was not to the credit of David, being guilty of the same sin with Eli; and on this Adonijah presumed much, that he would not contradict and countermand in this as he had not in other things before: in saying, why hast thou done so ? never so much as asked a reason of his conduct, so far was he from reproving him for it: and he [also] was a very goodly [man] ; of a comely countenance, tall and well proportioned, as his brother Absalom, and which was another thing on which he built his hopes of succeeding in his enterprise; for in those times, as in later times, and other nations, a comely aspect and personable appearance recommended a man to the choice of the people for a supreme magistrate, (see Gill on “ 1 Samuel 9:2”); and [his mother] bare him after Absalom ; not that the same woman bore him as did Absalom; for Absalom's mother was Maachah, this man's Haggith; but she bore him after Absalom's mother had bore him, so that he was next son; and now Amnon, Chileab, or Daniel, and Absalom, being all dead, he was the eldest son living, and upon this he founded his claim to the throne, and his hope of succeeding.

Ver. 7 . And he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah, and with Abiathar the priest , etc.] About getting the kingdom into his hands: and they were very proper persons to consult with, who, if gained to his interest, might be of great service, the one being the general of the army, and so had a great interest in the soldiery, with whom he could make way

for him, and defend him, and the other was the high priest, who might be thought to have a great share in the affections of the people, and whose office it was to anoint the king; and he might the rather apply to them, knowing them to be, on some accounts, discontented persons: and they following Adonijah, helped [him] ; they took on his side; Joab knowing David's hatred of him on account of his murder of Abner and Amasa, and especially for his slaying his son Absalom, and his insolent behaviour towards him, and perhaps he might fear, or had an aim of what he had charged Solomon with concerning him; and Abiathar, who saw plainly that the priesthood in Eli's family was declining, and that Zadok was the favourite priest with David, and in all probability would be with Solomon; all which might influence these two persons to join Adonijah, and who, by so doing, greatly encouraged him, and many others to flock to him, which much helped and served his cause.

Ver. 8 . But Zadok the priest , etc.] Who bid fair to be the high priest on Solomon's coming to the throne as he was: and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada ; who was near David's person, and over his bodyguards, the Cherethites and Pelethites: and Nathan the prophet ; a very great intimate of David's, and his seer, whom he consulted on all occasions: and Shimei ; who, according to Abarbinel, was Shimei the son of Gera, who had cursed David, and was afraid of entering into the conspiracy, lest he should be involved in trouble again: though some think this may be that Shimei, one of Solomon's twelve officers, as after constituted, (1 Kings 4:18); and Rei ; whom the same writer takes to be Hushai the Archite, David's friend: and the mighty men which [belonged] to David ; that were about his person, his guards, the Cherethites and Pelethites: were not with Adonijah ; they did not join him, and indeed were not invited by him.

Ver. 9 . And Adonijah slew sheep and oxen and fat cattle , etc.] To make a feast of for those that were of his party, which was numerous, and some of them persons of the first rank, and therefore a large and elegant entertainment was provided for them: by the stone of Zohemoth, which [is] by Enrogel ; or the fullers' fountain, as the Targum, where the fullers washed their clothes, using their feet in doing it, from whence it had its name; and which they laid upon this stone for the water to drain out of them, "Zohemoth" signifying a slow motion of waters, or on which they beat them to get out the spots; the Targum calls it the stone of a watchtower, on which they could stand and look to a great distance; or, as Jarchi and Ben Gersom suggest, it was a large smooth stone, which young

men used to come to, and cast to and fro to try and exercise their strength; it was, as Josephus says, in or near the king's gardens: and called all his brethren the king's sons : which David by his wives and concubines had in Hebron and Jerusalem; who were all younger than he, and so had not the pretension he had, and who might be displeased at the appointment of Solomon as well as he; (see 1 Chronicles 3:4,9); and all the men of Judah the king's servants ; excepting those in (Kings 1:8-10).

Ver. 10 . But Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, and the mighty men, and Solomon his brother, he called not .] Did not invite them to this feast; not Nathan, who he might know had prophesied of Solomon's succession in the throne, and therefore it could not be thought he would be drawn over to him; nor "Benaiah and the mighty men"; David's bodyguards, over whom this officer was; and still less Solomon, his competitor and rival.

Ver. 11 . Wherefore Nathan spake unto Bathsheba the mother of Solomon , etc.] Who not only had an interest in the king, being his wife, and an easy access to him, but had a special concern in this affair, as it affected her son, to whom the succession of the kingdom was designed and promised: saying, hast thou not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith doth reign ? has usurped the throne, and is proclaimed king by a party, who at least have drank his health as such; has taken the title, and is about to exercise the power of a king; this Bathsheba might not have heard of, and which he expresses in this manner to quicken her to make an immediate application to the king: and David our Lord knoweth [it] not ; being so infirm, and in his bed, and nobody about him to inform him of it; it was done without his knowledge, and far from being with his consent and approbation.

Ver. 12 . Now therefore come, let me, I pray thee, give thee counsel , etc.] How to conduct in this affair, which she being a woman, and no doubt surprised and confounded at this relation, might be at a loss what to do; wherefore Nathan, being a wise man, and a faithful friend, offers to give the best advice he could, and desires her attention to it: says he, that thou mayest save thine own life, and the life of thy son Solomon ; which would be the usurper's first care to take away, that he might have no rival, and none to disturb him in his government; which step has been often taken by usurpers to secure themselves, (see Judges 9:5).

Ver. 13 . Go and get thee in unto King David , etc.] That is, go into

the chamber where the king lay, at once, without any ceremony: and say unto him, didst not thou, my lord, O king, swear unto thine handmaid, saying, assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne ? though no mention is elsewhere made of such an oath, there undoubtedly was one, of which Nathan had knowledge, either from David or Bathsheba, or from them both, or might be present himself at the making of it; for not only Bathsheba affirms it, (1 Kings 1:17); but David owns it and confirms it, (1 Kings 1:30); why then doth Adonijah reign ? surely it cannot be with the king's knowledge and consent, so manifestly contrary to his promise and oath.

Ver. 14 . Behold, while thou yet talkest there with the king , etc.] Before, or by the time she could deliver the above words to him, or such as she should think fit to use, to awaken the king to a concern for the interest of her and her son: I will also come in after thee ; directly into the king's chamber: and confirm thy words ; as he could very well do, if he was present as a witness of the oath he had made to her, as well as he could confirm the truth of Adonijah's usurpation; nay, could plead the will and promises of God he had formerly notified to him: or, "fill up thy words" f6 , make up what might be wanting in her address to him, in her account of things, or in the arguments used by her; he means, that he would second her in her motion in favour of Solomon, and press the king to take some steps for the security of the succession to him. Nathan knew it was the will of God that Solomon should succeed in the kingdom, he had promised it by him, (see 2 Samuel 7:12 1 Chronicles 21:8,9); yet, as a wise and good man, he thought it right to make use of all proper means to attain the end.

Ver. 15 . And Bathsheba went in unto the king into the chamber , etc.] Where he lay, being bedridden; she took Nathan's advice, and directly went to the king's apartment: and the king was very old : and decrepit, borne down with the infirmities of old age, though but seventy years of age: and Abishag the Shunammite ministered unto the king ; she was then waiting upon the king, and serving him with what was necessary and proper for him; and perhaps there was no other in the chamber at that time.

Ver. 16 . And Bathsheba bowed, and did obeisance to the king , etc.] Not only as being her husband, but her sovereign; and this behaviour might intimate, that she had something to say to him, and more than to inquire of his health: and the king said, wouldest thou ? what hast thou to say to me? or to ask of me? what is thy will and pleasure, or thine errand

to me?

Ver. 17 . And she said unto him, my lord, thou swarest by the Lord thy God unto thine handmaid , etc.] Which was a very solemn oath, and binding, and which she puts David in mind of, knowing that so conscientious a man as he was would religiously observe it: [saying], assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and shall sit upon my throne ; be his successor in it, and established on it.

Ver. 18 . And now, behold, Adonijah reigneth , etc.] Has set up himself as king, and is by some saluted as such; but lest it should be thought by David that she suggested by this that he was guilty of the breach of his oath, or on any account to be blamed, she adds: and now my lord, O king, thou knowest [it] not ; which as it acquitted him from all blame, so it made the sin of Adonijah the more heinous, that he should do this without consulting his father about it; and was not only neglect of him as a father, and an act of disrespect and disobedience to him as such, but even of high treason, to assume the throne in his father's lifetime, without his consent.

Ver. 19 . And he hath slain oxen, and fat cattle, and sheep in abundance , etc.] Has made a grand entertainment, and is feasting and rejoicing; which was another instance of irreverence and disrespect to his aged father, labouring under the infirmities of old age, and on his dying bed, and he carousing, and showing all the tokens of pleasure in the view of his death, and wishing for it: and hath called all the sons of the king ; invited them to his entertainment, in order to gain them to his interest: and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the captain of the host ; two persons, though of eminent rank, she knew David had no respect for, and therefore it would not be pleasing to him to hear that they were invited, had this affair been more acceptable than it was; Bathsheba, considering the shortness of the time she had to think, and the flurry she must be in, very artfully threw together the most material things that might work upon the mind of David in her favour: but Solomon thy servant hath he not called ; which made it a plain case that it was not a feast of a peace offering, nor a common friendly entertainment, but a feast made on account of his accession to the throne; and that he looked upon Solomon as his rival, and bore an ill will to him on that account, and bad a design upon him.

Ver. 20 . And thou, my lord, O king , etc.] As for thee, or what concerns thee, or is incumbent on thee, will appear from the expectations

of the people: the eyes of all Israel [are] upon thee, that thou shouldest tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him ; this she said, to dissipate any fears that might possess his mind on hearing what Adonijah had done, that the people in general had assented to it, and encouraged him to it; whereas the body of the people were waiting to hear what was the will and determination of David: for they not only considered him as having a power to name a successor, as was afterwards done by Rehoboam, but as one that had the mind of God revealed to him who should be his successor, to which they should pay a regard.

Ver. 21 . Otherwise it shall come to pass, when my lord the king shall sleep with his fathers , etc.] That is, shall die, and be buried in the sepulchre of his ancestors, where he shall lie till he awakes in the morning of the resurrection: that I and my son Solomon shall be counted offenders ; or “sinners” f7 ; not as if she would be reckoned an adulteress, and her son as illegitimate, as some think, and so be branded and treated as such; but as being traitors, making pretensions to the throne, she on the behalf of her son, and he for himself, when he had no right to it, being the younger son, and not declared successor by his father.

Ver. 22 . And, lo, while she yet talked with the king , etc.] Just as she was concluding her speech to him: Nathan the prophet also came in ; as he promised he would; perhaps was at the chamber door all the while Bathsheba was speaking, and when he perceived she was just finishing, he entered in without ceremony, as he had used to do, being the king’s seer and counsellor, and a prophet, who had admittance to the king at any time.

Ver. 23 . And they told the king , etc.] Some that attended at the door, or were in the chamber: saying, behold, Nathan the prophet ; or he is in the room, which the king through his infirmities might not be sensible of: and when he was come in before the king ; nearer to him, and as to be properly in his presence: he bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground ; showing him the same reverence, though in bed, as if on his throne.

Ver. 24 . And Nathan said, my lord, O king , etc.] He addresses him as with great veneration and respect due to his office, so as if he knew noticing of Bathsheba’s application to him; and therefore begins and tells his story, as if the king had never heard anything relative to it: hast thou said, Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne

? surely it can never be, because of the notice which he himself had given him from the Lord, that one to be born should succeed him, plainly pointing to Solomon; and also because of the oath which he had sworn, to which Nathan was privy, that Solomon should reign after him; and yet if he had not given such orders, it was exceeding strange that Adonijah should presume to do what he had done.

Ver. 25 . For he is gone down this day , etc.] From Jerusalem, which lay high, to the stone of Zoheleth, in Enrogel, which lay in the valley, (Kings 1:9); and hath slain oxen, and fat cattle, and sheep in abundance ; not by way of sacrifice, but for a feast, on account of his coming to the kingdom: and hath called all the king's sons ; invited them to the entertainment: and the captains of the host ; or army; not only Joab, it seems, the general of it, but the captains of thousands and hundreds under him, being desirous of engaging the militia in his favour, and which was not an impolitic step: and Abiathar the priest ; to consult with by Urim and Thummim, and to anoint him, and use his interest with the populace for him, who might be supposed a man of influence, being the high priest of the nation: and, behold, they eat and drink before him ; they were now at it, at this time, they were not only invited, but they accepted the invitation, and came; which is afore than what was before related: and say, God save King Adonijah ; they proclaimed and saluted him as king, and drank his health, and wished him all prosperity; and so the Targum, “may King Adonijah prosper!”

Ver. 26 . But me, [even] me thy servant , etc.] Meaning himself, Nathan the prophet, who was David's servant, his seer, and counsellor: and Zadok the priest ; for whom David had a great respect: and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada ; who was captain of his bodyguards; here Nathan observes more than Bathsheba had, and supplies what she had omitted, and so filled up her words, as in (1 Kings 1:14); and thy servant Solomon, hath he not called ; which showed his ill intention.

Ver. 27 . Is this thing done by my lord the king , etc.] With his knowledge and consent, and by his orders: and thou hast not showed [it] unto thy servant ; meaning himself, who had brought him a message from the Lord, signifying that Solomon should succeed him; and therefore if that had been countermanded, it seemed strange that he should not have acquainted him with it: or “to thy servants”, as the Arabic version; for the word has a plural ending, though pointed as singular; and so it may mean

not only himself, but the rest of David's faithful servants that were about him at court, as Kimchi observes: who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him ? if he had altered his mind, or had had any direction from the Lord to make any change, he wondered at it that he should neither acquaint him, nor any of his trusty friends, with it.

Ver. 28 . Then King David answered and said , etc.] Observing that Nathan confirmed the account that Bathsheba had given, and that it must be a matter of fact that Adonijah had usurped the throne, gave orders to those about him, saying, call me Bathsheba ; who either went out of the room when Nathan entered it, or however removed to some distant part of it, out of the sight of David: and she came into the king's presence, and stood before the king ; came to the side or foot of his bed, hearkening to what he had to say to her.

Ver. 29 . And the king swore , etc.] To his former oath, he added another for greater confirmation: and said, [as] the Lord liveth ; which was the proper form of an oath, which ought to be taken by the living God; and as what would lay him under the greater obligation to observe it, he adds, that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress ; saved his life when in the most imminent danger; delivered him out of the hand of Goliath, and from the Philistines and other enemies, in his wars with them; and from Saul and his persecuting rage and fury, and from the rebellion of his son Absalom, and the insurrection of Sheba.

Ver. 30 . Even as I swear unto thee by the Lord God of Israel , etc.] And so owns and confirms the truth of what Nathan had suggested to Bathsheba, and she had asserted, (1 Kings 1:13,17); saying, assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead ; this was the substance of the oath: even so will I certainly do this day ; perform this oath, and set Solomon on the throne.

Ver. 31 . Then Bathsheba bowed with [her] face to the earth, and did reverence to the king , etc.] Thereby expressing her veneration of him, and thankfulness to him for his favour to her and her son, in fulfilling his promise and oath: and said, let my lord King David live for ever ; which though a common form of salutation of kings, not only in Israel, but in other nations, is not to be considered as a mere compliment, but as expressing the real desires and affection of her heart to the king; signifying hereby that her solicitations on the behalf of her son did not arise from

any desire of the king's death; she heartily wished him health to live long and easy; and all her request was, that Solomon her son might succeed him, whenever it pleased God to remove him; or seeing he was now a dying man as it were, her prayer was that his soul might live for ever in happiness in the world to come; so Kimchi interprets it.

Ver. 32 . And King David said, call me Zadok the priest , etc.] Not Abiathar the high priest, for he had joined Adonijah; and besides Zadok was David's favourite priest, and for him the high priesthood was designed, as it was in a little time translated to him: and Nathan the prophet ; who very probably went out of the room when Bathsheba was called in: and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada ; the captain of his guards: and they came before the king ; who it is very likely sat up in his bed, and they stood around him.

Ver. 33 . And the king said unto them, take ye the servants of your lord , etc.] Meaning his own servants, his bodyguards, the Cherethites and Pelethites, as appears from (1 Kings 1:38); the Jews from hence gather, that a king is superior to an high priest, since David calls himself the lord of Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet: and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule ; for it seems on such a creature David used to ride, as did his sons; horses not being so common in Judea as they were afterwards. Some of the Jews say it was not lawful to ride upon a mule, and that this case of David is to be excepted; for they pretend that this was a peculiar mule; and if the instance of his son urged, they reply, an argument from what kings and their sons used to do is of no force. Now this was one way of testifying that it was his will that Solomon should reign in his stead; for no private person might ride upon the beast the king was wont to ride on; this is now one of the Jewish canons f10 , "no one may ride on the king's horse, nor sit on his throne, nor use his sceptre:" and bring him down to Gihon ; a fountain near Jerusalem, on the west side of it, which flowed from Mount Gihon, (2 Chronicles 32:30 33:14); the same with Siloah according to the Targum, of which mention is made, (John 9:7). The reason for this order is not easily given; whether it was to denote the peaceableness and gentleness of Solomon's government, the waters of Shiloah moving softly, (Isaiah 8:6), or the spread, constancy, firmness, and perpetuity of it, as the Jews say f11 , since the water of a fountain is ever running; or because there might be a concourse of people there, and so he would be anointed and proclaimed king in a public manner, and be attended to the city with great pomp and solemnity.

Ver. 34 . And let Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, anoint him there king over Israel , etc.] For it might be done by either of them, as the unctions of Saul and David show: and blow ye the trumpet, and say, God save King Solomon ; the blowing of the trumpet was to make it public; the proclamation of him as king was to be made by the sound of it, and the acclamation of the people was to express their concurrence with it, their loyal affection to the new king, and their hearty wishes for his health, prosperity, and long life.

Ver. 35 . Then ye shall come up after him , etc.] When anointed, proclaimed, and cheered, then he was to mount the mule, and ride before them as their king, at the head of them; they following after, in token of their subjection to him: that he may come and sit upon my throne ; at Jerusalem, in the king's palace, and there exercise his kingly power he would now be invested with: for he shall be king in my stead ; even during David's life, as well as after his decease: and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel, and over Judah ; that is, over all the twelve tribes of Israel Judah may be particularly mentioned, though included in Israel, because Adonijah had invited the men of Judah to his feast and party, (1 Kings 1:9); and therefore had they not been named, might think he had no power over them.

Ver. 36 . And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king , etc.] In the name of the rest: and said, Amen ; they all assented to it, and expressed their satisfaction in it: the Lord God of my lord the king say so [too] ; let it appear, by the prosperity and success that shall by divine Providence attend the new king, that this is according to the will of God. Ver. 37 . As the Lord hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Solomon , etc.] To guide and direct him, protect and defend him, succeed and prosper him the Targum is, "as the Word of the Lord has been the help of my lord the king, so let him be for the help of Solomon:" and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord King David : which he knew would not displease David, who not only had an affectionate regard for Solomon his son, but wished heartily the prosperity of the kingdom of Israel; and the wish on all accounts was grateful to him, though to an envious and ambitious prince it might have been disagreeable.

Ver. 38 . So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada , etc.] The three men that David sent for on this occasion:

and the Cherethites and the Pelethites ; not the sanhedrim, as Ben Gersom, but David's guards, over whom Benaiah was: these went down ; from Jerusalem; and caused Solomon to ride upon King David's mule ; as he had ordered: and brought him to Gihon ; or Siloah, as the Targum; hence the Jews say f12 , they do not anoint a king but at a fountain; but this is the only instance of it.

Ver. 39 . And Zadok the priest took an horn of oil out of the tabernacle , etc.] Not out of the tabernacle of Moses, for that was at Gibeon; (see Chronicles 21:29); and if the oil had been there, it would have been too far to have fetched it, since haste was now required; but this was taken out of the tabernacle David had built for the ark, (2 Samuel 6:17); where the ark was, and before which the pot of oil was; so Jarchi; but Kimchi indeed says, that though it was at this time at Gibeon, Zadok went thither, or sent thither to fetch it; and though it is said, the pot of oil was set before the ark, this was when the ark was in the tabernacle; but when they took it out from thence at the war with the Philistines, that and the pot of manna were left in the tabernacle; and they took nothing but the ark; but if they brought the pot afterwards, and put it before the ark in Jerusalem, then it may be understood of the tabernacle David pitched for it; but that he disapproves of. Here Zadok is only said to take the oil, and anoint with it; which he did either as the deputy of the high priest, or he was made use of because the high priest was on the side of Adonijah: and anointed Solomon ; whether it was by pouring it on his head, as Saul was anointed, (1 Samuel 10:1); or, as the Jews say f13 , by putting it round about his head in the form of a crown, and then between his eyebrows, is not very material; and they also say f14 , that it is not usual to anoint the son of a king that has been anointed; and that the reason of the anointing of Solomon was, because of the sedition of his brother Adonijah, and to confirm the kingdom to him; this anointing was an emblem of the gifts, graces, and virtues, necessary to qualify a king for the discharge of his office: and they blew the trumpet ; and proclaimed him king: and all the people said, God save King Solomon ; wished him long life and happiness, and gave him a general huzza or shouting.

Ver. 40 . And all the people came up after him , etc.] Following him from the fountain to the city, with their loud acclamations: and the people piped with pipes ; which were hollow instruments, and full of holes which they blew with their mouths, and upon with their fingers; Jarchi says they were and very probably: and rejoiced with great joy ; which they

expressed by such loud shouts: so that the earth rent with the sound thereof ; an hyperbolical expression, showing the great numbers gathered together on this occasion, and the sonorous acclamations they made.

Ver. 41 . And Adonijah and all the guests that [were] with him , etc.] Or that were “called” f15 ; that is, invited to the entertainment he had made: heard [it], as they had made an end of eating ; the shouting of the people, which reached their ears just as they had finished their meal, and before they had risen from the table, where they had been a long while; for when Nathan went in to David, they were then eating and drinking, (1 Kings 1:25); and when he had finished his speech to David, Bathsheba was called in, and the kingdom promised to her son with an oath, three persons of the first rank were sent for, and had their orders and instructions, for the immediate execution of which they made preparation, and had Solomon down to Gihon, and there anointed him king, and brought him up to Jerusalem again; all which were done before Adonijah and his guests rose from table: and when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, wherefore [is] this noise of the city being in an uproar ? the city is in a tumult by the noise that is made, what should be the meaning of it? he speaks as one surprised, and in great concern, being general of the army, whose care should be to preserve the peace of the city, and prevent mutiny and disorder.

Ver. 42 . And while he yet spake, behold, Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest came , etc.] Whom his father had left in the city, to observe what passed there, and give him notice of it: and Adonijah said unto him, come in, for thou [art] a valiant man, and bringest good tidings ; which seems to be not a very wise speech, as if there was a connection between being valiant, and bringing good news, or that the one had any influence upon the other; though perhaps it means no more than a good man, “a man of virtue” f16 , as it may be rendered; one that fears sin, as the Targum, and so would report nothing but what was true, and therefore might be depended on; (see 2 Samuel 18:27); the same phrase is rendered “a worthy man”, (1 Kings 1:52).

Ver. 43 . And Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, verily , etc.] Or, “nay, but” it is not so as you imagine; it is not good tidings, but bad tidings to thee I bring: our lord King David hath made Solomon king ; of which he gives the following account in proof of it.

Ver. 44 . And the king hath sent with him , etc.] To the fountain of Gihon: Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites ; over whom the latter was captain: and they have caused him to ride upon the king's mule ; by his order and direction.

Ver. 45 . And Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, have anointed him king in Gihon , etc.] Or at Gihon; that is, Siloah, according to the Targum; here the act of anointing is ascribed to them both, as in (Kings 1:34); Zadok very probably applied the oil to him, and Nathan might be some way or other assisting in it; however he was here present, not only as approving of it, but declaring it as a prophet, that it was according to the will of God, as well as of the king: and they are come up from thence rejoicing ; with a multitude of people along with them: so that the city rang again ; with the blowing of trumpets, the sound of pipings, and the shouts of the people: this [is] the noise which ye have heard ; which had so alarmed them.

Ver. 46 . And also Solomon sitteth on the throne of the kingdom .] Where he was placed to exercise his regal power when returned to Jerusalem, as a further token and confirmation of his being really and actually king.

Ver. 47 . And moreover the king's servants came to bless our lord the king , etc.] To give him thanks for the wise and good provision he had made before his death for the welfare of the kingdom, by making Solomon his son king in his stead, and to congratulate him upon it; which showed that they highly approved of it, and were ready to swear allegiance to Solomon, and therefore Adonijah had nothing to hope for from them: saying, God make the name of Solomon better than thy name ; that is, may he be more famous, and his name be more celebrated in the world than his was, or be more respectable and valued among his people Israel: and make his throne greater than thy throne ; (see 1 Kings 1:37); and the king bowed himself upon the bed ; signifying not only his approbation of what was done, but also of their prayers and wishes; as well as he bowed himself to give thanks to God that he had lived to see this work done, as follows.

Ver. 48 . And also thus said the king , etc.] Being in a proper posture for an address to God: blessed [be] the Lord God of Israel, which hath given [one] to sit on my throne this day, mine eyes seeing [it] ; he ascribes

this whole affair to God, and his kind providence, though all things were done according to his own orders; and gives thanks to him, who had directed him to take such steps as these were, and that the business was finished without any obstruction, and to the great joy and satisfaction of the people; and that there was such a prospect of Solomon's having a happy and peaceable reign. Ver. 49 . And all the guests that [were] with Adonijah [were] afraid , etc.] Though many of them were military men, the general of the army, and the captains thereof, (1 Kings 1:19,25); yet they were struck with a panic, their courage failed them, they had no spirit left in them, their hearts became as weak as water; had they exerted themselves according to their character, betaken themselves to arms, and put themselves at the head of their troops in favour of Adonijah, it would have given Solomon and his friends a great deal of trouble; no doubt this panic was of God: and rose up, and went every man his way ; or to his house, as the Arabic version; on hearing what Jonathan reported, they immediately rose up from table in great haste, and made the best of their way to their houses, that it might not be known that they had been with Adonijah.

Ver. 50 . And Adonijah feared because of Solomon , etc.] Lest he should seize him as an usurper and traitor, and put him to death: and arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar ; either that which was at Gibeon, where the tabernacle now was; (see 1 Kings 3:4); so Jarchi; or rather that which was nearest, the altar that David had built in the threshingfloor of Araunah, (2 Samuel 24:25); the altar was a sort of asylum, or refuge, for such who had committed any crime worthy of death; not by divine appointment, but by custom, it being supposed that none would presume to defile with blood that which was sacred to the Lord; or shed the blood of men where the blood of beasts was poured; or use severity and strict justice, but mercy, where sacrifices were offered to atone for sin, and mercy was shown on account of them; these were notions, and this a custom, which obtained very early, and even among the Jews; (see Exodus 21:14); as well as among Gentiles; with whom it was usual, as to flee to the statues of their emperors, and to the temples of their deities, so likewise to their altars; this was customary among the Molossians, Samothracians, Crotoniatae, and Messenians; and particularly the altar of Jupiter Servator was an asylum, or place of refuge, to the Ithacians f18 . Cornelius Nepos has given us an instance of one that fled to a temple of Neptune, and sat upon the altar for his security, as here Adonijah laid hold on the horns of this, that none might force him from it.

Ver. 51 . And it was told Solomon , etc.] By some of his courtiers: saying, behold, Adonijah feareth King Solomon ; lest he should take away his life: for, lo, he hath caught hold on the horns of the altar ; which was the last resort of the guilty when they despaired of mercy otherwise: saying, let King Solomon swear unto me this day that he will not slay his servant with the sword ; he owns Solomon to be king, and himself his subject and servant; this no doubt he did to conciliate his favour, nor did he think his life safe, unless Solomon promised with an oath, that he would not take it away.

Ver. 52 . And Solomon said, if he will show himself a worthy man , etc.] Will behave himself well as a good subject, and be careful not to offend for the future, or appear to be one that fears sin, as the Targum; particularly the crimes of sedition, rebellion, and treason: there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth ; not the least harm should be done him: but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die ; that is, if any crime worthy of death be committed by him, or any overt act of treason, and the like, he should surely be put to death, and find no mercy, notwithstanding the present general pardon. This was very wisely done by Solomon, to begin his reign without shedding blood even of delinquents; and especially of his brother, and his elder brother too; and by granting his life for the future on his good behaviour.

Ver. 53 . So King Solomon sent, and they brought down Adonijah from the altar , etc.] It being built upon an hill, as both that at Gibeon, and in Araunah's threshing floor, were: and he came and bowed himself to King Solomon ; in a way of reverence and subjection, acknowledging him to be king, and himself his subject: and Solomon said to him, go to thine house ; in peace; signifying that he pardoned him, and he might go home, and enjoy his family and substance; and by this intimating that he should only regard the affairs of his family, and not trouble himself with those of the kingdom and state, Abarbinel fancies, that because Solomon said, that if he showed himself to be a worthy man, or a man of fortitude and valour, that Adonijah thought that his meaning was, that he should go before him as a man of war, and minister to him; which made him so ready to come and stand before him; in which he was mistaken, Solomon meant no such thing; nor would he take him into his court and service, but sent him home to his own house.

This chapter gives an account of the charge David gave to his son Solomon, a little before his death, to walk in the ways of the Lord, (<110201> Kings 2:1-4); and of some instructions delivered to him concerning some particular persons he should either show favour to, or execute justice on, (1 Kings 2:5-9); and the next account in it is concerning his death and burial, and the years of his reign, (1 Kings 2:10,11); after which it relates an address of Bathsheba to Solomon in favour of Adonijah, which was refused, and the issue of it was his death, (1 Kings 2:12-25); and the deposition of Abiathar from the priesthood, (1 Kings 2:26,27); and the putting of Joab to death for his treason and murders, (1 Kings 2:28-34); in whose post Benaiah was put, as Zadok was in the place of Abiathar, (1 Kings 2:35); and lastly the confinement of Shimei in Jerusalem, who had cursed David, (1 Kings 2:36-38); who upon transgressing the orders given him was put to death, (1 Kings 2:39-46).

Ver. 1 . Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die , etc.] The number of his days fixed and determined by the Lord, (Job 14:5); and which might be perceived as drawing nigh, both by himself and others, through the growing infirmities of old age, decline of nature, and various symptoms of an approaching dissolution which were upon him; (see Genesis 47:29). Abarbinel observes, that he is called only David, not King David; because Solomon his son was now anointed king, and reigned in his stead; so in (1 Kings 1:10,11); but there is another reason given by some Jews f20 , that no man, even a king, has power in the day of death; he is no king then, he has no rule over that, but that rules over him: and he charged Solomon his son ; gave him his last and dying charge: saying ; as follows.

Ver. 2 . I go the way of all the earth , etc.] A path which is the path of death f21 , which all pass in, kings and peasants, high and low, rich and poor, great and small, good and bad; none are exempted, all must die, and do; it is the appointment of God, a decree which can never be reversed; all experience confirms it: this same phrase is used by Joshua, from whom David seems to have borrowed it, and shows that that book was written in his days, (Joshua 23:14); be thou strong therefore ; not discouraged at my death, being a common thing, and to be expected; nor at being left alone, the Lord can give thee wisdom and counsel, assistance and strength, protection, and defence; take heart therefore, and be of good courage: and show thyself a man ; in wisdom and understanding, and in fortitude of

mind, though so young a man; which were necessary for the government of so great a people, and to guard against the secret intrigues of some, and the open flatteries of others, and the fear of attempts against his person and government, and the temptations he might be liable to, to do wrong things; and especially they were necessary to enable him to keep the commands of God, as follows; which required great strength of mind and of grace, considering the corruptions of nature, the temptations of Satan, and the snares of men; (see Joshua 1:7).

Ver. 3 . And keep the charge of the Lord thy God , etc.] Which may in general respect his whole walk and conversation, and his obedience to the law and will of God; and in particular his just government of Israel committed to his charge: to walk in his ways ; directed to in his word: to keep his statutes and his judgments ; his laws, ceremonial, moral, and judicial: and his testimonies ; as the above laws, which testify of his mind, and declare what he would have done and observed: as it is written in the law of Moses ; which a king of Israel was obliged to write a copy of, keep by him, and read it, and rule according to it, (Deuteronomy 17:18-20): that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself ; to reign in righteousness, and according to the law of God, is the only way to have a prosperous and happy reign: or “that thou mayest act wisely” f22 ; the law of God furnishing out the best rules of government and maxims of policy; (see Deuteronomy 4:6,7). Ver. 4 . That the Lord may continue his word which he spake concerning me , etc.] his word of promise concerning the kingdom of David, and the succession of it, and confirm and establish it: saying, if thy children take heed to their way ; they are directed to walk in, even the way of the Lord, and not turn to the right hand or the left: to walk before me in truth : in the sincerity and integrity of their hearts, according to the word of truth, and under the influence of the spirit of truth: with all their heart, and with all their soul ; in the most cordial manner, with the strongest affection and zeal; with all eagerness and earnestness; with their whole hearts engaged in every duty performed by them: then the Lord said, there shall not fail thee a man on the throne of Israel ; one to succeed him in the throne; this, with respect to his throne, literally considered, was conditional; but, spiritually considered, was absolute, and had its fulfilment in the Messiah, whose throne is for ever; see (Luke 1:32,33).

Ver. 5 . Moreover thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did unto me , etc.] In slaying Absalom, contrary to his orders, and in behaving

insolently towards him on account of his mourning for him, and at other times; but as these things might not be personally known to Solomon, only by hearsay, this may respect his disloyalty towards him, in joining with Adonijah, who set himself up for king in his lifetime, and without his knowledge and consent; or it may respect the instances next mentioned, in which he did injury to the interest, honour, and character of David: [and] , or “even”, what he did to the two captains of the host of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and unto Amasa the son of Jether, whom he slew ; to Abner who was under Ishbosheth, and Amasa under David, who had not only the promise of the post, but was actually in it when Joab slew him; and indeed out of envy to him for it: and shed the blood of war in peace ; when they were at peace with him, as if they had been in open war; and even under a pretence of friendship to them, asking of their peace and welfare, as if he meant nothing less than to behave peaceably towards them; hence the Targum is, “whom he slew in craftiness:” and put the blood of war upon the girdle that [was] about his loins , and in his shoes that [were] in his feet ; which particularly respects the affair of Amasa, whose blood he shed with his sword, that dropped out of its scabbard, girded upon his loins, and into which he put it again, all over bloody, and wore it girded upon his loins; and which he also stooped for when it fell, as if he was going to unloose or buckle his shoes, and into which the blood ran down when he stabbed him; and after this barbarous action marched on without any shame or remorse, with his bloody sword on his loins, and the blood of the murdered in his shoes.

Ver. 6 . Do therefore according to thy wisdom , etc.] Which though young began to appear in him, even in the life of his father; he therefore exhorts him to use the wisdom he had, and take the first and fittest opportunity to cut him off for his former murders and late treason, as a dangerous man to his government and the peace of it: and let not his hoary head go down to the grave in peace ; that is, let him not die a natural, but a violent death; and let not his grey hairs be any argument for sparing him, or any reason for delaying the taking of him off, because he would in course die quickly; for he must be now an old man, as old as David, or perhaps older; since he had been his general forty years, even all the time of his reign; (see 2 Samuel 2:13).

Ver. 7 . But show kindness to the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite , etc.] Who perhaps was now dead, and therefore he would have kindness shown to his posterity for his sake: and let them be of those that eat of thy table ;

as Mephibosheth had at his, who also perhaps was dead, since no notice is taken of him; and as David would have had Barzillai, but he desired to be excused on account of his age: for so they came to me, when I fled because of thy brother, Absalom ; that is, they came to him, not only Barzillai, but his sons it seems; and fed him or furnished him with provisions, when he was obliged to fly to the other side Jordan, because of the rebellion of his son Absalom.

Ver. 8 . And behold [thou hast] with thee Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim , etc.] Of whom, and of his native place, (see Gill on “ 2 Samuel 16:5”); he was now at Jerusalem, and so with Solomon, or near at hand; and was on his side, and of his party; (see 1 Kings 1:8); but not to be trusted, or looked upon as a real friend: which cursed me with a grievous curse, when I went to Mahanaim ; a place on the other side Jordan, of which place, and the curses this man cursed David, with, (see 2 Samuel 16:7,8 17:24); but he came down to me at Jordan ; after the defeat of Absalom, and when David was returning, and humbled himself to him, and begged his pardon: and I swore unto him by the Lord, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword ; but this oath was not binding upon his successor, and especially should he commit a new crime.

Ver. 9 . Now therefore hold him not guiltless , etc.] Do not look upon him as an innocent person; and if he commits an offence against thee, as he has against me, do not acquit him as I have done: for thou [art] a wise man ; so it seems he was before the appearance of the Lord to him at Gibeon, even before his father's death he had given some proofs of it to David himself: and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him ; to watch and observe him, and, if found offending, to punish him according to the rules of justice, and the laws of the land: but his hoary head bring thou down to the grave with blood ; spare him not on account of his age, but put him to death whensoever he shall be found guilty, let him not die a natural death.

Ver. 10 . So David slept with his fathers , etc.] Died as his ancestors before him did; for, buried with them he was not; and therefore cannot be understood of his lying with them in the grave, but in the state of the dead; he died according as the Jews say on the day of Pentecost, and according to Bishop Usher A. M. 2990, and before Christ 1014; and was buried in the city of David ; not at Bethlehem, in the sepulchre of Jesse, who was a private man; but being a king, in his own city, the hold of Zion he took from the Jebusite, and which afterwards was called by his name, (2 Samuel

5:7); and his sepulchre remained unto the times of the apostles, upwards of a thousand years, (see Gill on “ Acts 2:29”). Ver. 11 . And the days that David reigned over Israel [were] forty years , etc.] So says Eupolemus f25 , an Heathen writer, which are thus reckoned: seven years reigned he in Hebron ; the six months over are omitted, (Samuel 5:5); this part of his reign was over Judah only: and thirty three years reigned he in Jerusalem ; over the twelve tribes, in all forty, which round number is only given; though in fact he reigned six months more.

Ver. 12 . Then sat Solomon on the throne of David his father , etc.] So he did in his lifetime, with his consent, and by his order, and now by the agreement of the whole people: and his kingdom was established greatly ; all submitting to it, and none opposing it.

Ver. 13 . And Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon , etc.] Into her apartment; Abarbinel thinks it was a few days after the death of David: and she said, comest thou peaceably ? in a friendly manner, with no ill design, only to pay a friendly visit; for she might fear he came to avenge himself on her, and destroy her, because she had been the instrument of disappointing him of the kingdom, and of getting her son Solomon set upon the throne, and established in it; and therefore could not tell what envy, rage, and disappointment, might prompt him to: and he said, peaceably ; he meant no harm unto her.

Ver. 14 . He said, moreover, I have something to say unto thee , etc.] Signifying that he came upon business: and she said, say on ; intimating her readiness to hear what it was.

Ver. 15 . And he said, thou knowest that the kingdom was mine , etc.] Belonged to him by virtue of his birthright; he was heir to it, being the eldest son: and [that] all Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign ; which was not true; for, as Bathsheba says, the body of the people were in suspense, their eyes being on David, waiting to hear whom he would declare his successor; and when Solomon was declared and anointed, vast numbers attended him; unless Adonijah thought that the high priest, and general of the army, with the captains, represented the whole people; however this he observes by way of preface, to show how unhappy he was, being disappointed, and to move the compassion of Bathsheba, that she might be the more easily prevailed upon to seek to obtain so small a favour as he was about to ask: howbeit the kingdom is turned about, and

is become my brother's ; things had taken another turn, and what was his, and he thought himself sure of the other day, was now become his brother's; such were the uncertainty and vicissitude of human affairs: for it was his from the Lord ; by the appointment of the Lord, by a promise of his, and a prophecy concerning it; which if he knew of, it was both vain and sinful in him to act contrary thereunto; or it was brought about by the overruling providence of God, which he now plainly saw and submitted to; this he said to show that he had laid aside all hopes of the kingdom, and was fully satisfied of the disposition of it in Providence, and so to hide his real design in the petition he was about to make.

Ver. 16 . And now I ask one petition of thee , etc.] And but one, and a small one too, as Bathsheba herself after calls it: deny me not , or “turn not away my face” f26 ; with shame and sorrow, which would be the case should he be denied: and she said unto him, say on ; let me hear it.

Ver. 17 . And he said, speak, I pray thee, unto Solomon the king , etc.] He owns him to be king, and which he the rather did to engage her to take his suit in hand, and to cover his design: for he will not say thee nay ; or turn away thy face, or deny thy request; she being his mother, for whom he had a great affection, and to whom he was under obligation on all accounts: that he give me Abishag the Shunammite to wife ; which was contrary to the law of God, (Leviticus 18:8); which surely Adonijah must have been ignorant of, and Bathsheba likewise; or the one would never have made such a request, nor the other have undertaken to try to obtain it; but perhaps they did not take her to be David's wife, or the marriage to be consummated, because he knew her not: but yet not being returned to her father's house, and being at the dispose of Solomon, prove that she must be a concubine wife, and which became the property of the next heir and successor; (see 2 Samuel 12:8); nor did Adonijah apply to her or her friends; which, if he was really in love with her, he would have done, if at her own or their disposal; but this he knew, that she was solely at the disposal of Solomon, to whom he did not care to apply himself, but makes use of his mother.

Ver. 18 . And Bathsheba said, well , etc.] Very well spoken, the thing is good and right: I will speak for thee unto the king ; and use her interest with him, not seeing into his design, but pitying an unfortunate man.

Ver. 19 . Bathsheba therefore went unto King Solomon, to speak unto

him for Adonijah , etc.] She went from her own house to the palace; for she might not live at court; or however had an apartment to herself, from whence she went to the king with her suit in favour of Adonijah: and the king rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her ; upon her entrance into the presence chamber, in honour to her as a parent, he rose up from his throne, and made his obeisance to her, as a dutiful son: and sat down on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother ; a magnificent seat or throne, as the word is, was ordered to be set for her: and she sat on his right hand ; where he placed her in honour to her as his mother; so Nero placed Tiridates king of Armenia at his right hand, to do him honour.

Ver. 20 . Then she said, I desire one small petition of thee , etc.] It was but one, and a little one, and therefore she hoped it would be granted: [I pray thee], say me not nay ; do not refuse it, or deny it me, or turn away my thee with shame and disappointment: and the king said, ask on, my mother, for I will not say thee nay ; since it is a small one, as thou sayest, and provided it is fit and lawful to be granted.

Ver. 21 . And she said, let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah thy brother to wife .] For so Adonijah was by his father's side; and Bathsheba makes use of the relation, the more to move upon him to grant the request. Ver. 22 . And King Solomon answered and said unto his mother , etc.] With as much gentleness and mildness as he could, but inwardly fired at her request, and amazed at it, and could not forbear using some degree of tartness and resentment: and why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah ? is this a small petition? is this a fit and lawful one? ask for him the kingdom also ; for this is what he means by it, that by marrying the king's widow he may step into the throne whenever any opportunity offers, as any uneasiness, or insurrection in the kingdom, or the death of Solomon; for none but a king, the Jews say f28 , might marry a king's widow, not any private man; and therefore for Adonijah to ask this was interpreted affecting the kingdom, and aspiring to it, and taking his measures to obtain it; yea, it is said f29 , that none but another king, the successor, might make use of his servants, handmaids, and ministers; and it is observed, that Abishag was free to Solomon, but not to Adonijah: for he [is] mine elder brother ; and has that to plead in his favour, and if he could obtain this, it would strengthen his title, or at least be a plausible pretence, which he might make use of, when opportunity served, to gain the people to his interest: even for him, and for Abiathar

the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah ; she might as well ask for them as for him; whose interest it was, and therefore desirous it might be that he should be king, that so the one might be continued in the office of high priest, and the other as general of the army; who, Solomon knew, bore him no good will, but were secretly his enemies; and he suspected that this was a scheme of theirs, and that it was by their advice Adonijah made this request; so the Targum, “are not he, and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the son of Zeruiah, in the counsel?” in this counsel; it is what they had consulted among themselves as a preparation to bring about a design they are contriving; probably Solomon had private notice that they were plotting against him, and this confirmed him in the truth of it; and therefore all of them were upon this punished with deprivation of office, or loss of life.

Ver. 23 . Then King Solomon sware by the Lord , etc.] To prevent his mother pressing him to have her petition granted: saying, God do so to me, and more also ; lay such and such evils upon me, and more than I care to express: if Adonijah have not spoken this word against his own life ; to his own prejudice, and even to the loss of his life; in which Solomon suggests it would issue, being a fresh overt act of treason; he knew, from what Bathsheba said, that this was his petition, and that he had spoken of this to her, and put her upon making it for him; and who no doubt related to Solomon the whole of the conversation that passed between them, and to which he seems to have some respect in his answer.

Ver. 24 . Now therefore, as the Lord liveth , etc.] Which is another oath; and one may easily perceive hereby in what a temper and disposition Solomon was, how warm, earnest, and vehement, how resolute against the petition, and how determined he was to punish Adonijah and his confederates: which hath established me, and set me upon the throne of David my father, and who hath made me an house, as he promised ; who had placed him on his father's throne, and established him there, in spite of all his enemies, and had given him a firm and stable kingdom, which was not to be shaken and subverted by the power and policy of conspirators, according to the promise of God by Nathan, (2 Samuel 7:11-13); Adonijah shall be put to death this day ; both for his former conspiracy, he only having had a reprieve, and which was to continue on his good behaviour, (1 Kings 1:51-53), and for his fresh attempt in forming treasonable schemes to ascend the throne if possible; wherefore, being a dangerous man, and no longer to be trusted, Solomon was determined to dispatch him at once, and being established in his kingdom, he had nothing to fear from those in the

Ver. 25 . And King Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada , etc.] Orders to execute him, and proper persons to do it; perhaps some of the Cherethites and Pelethites under him, to assist at least in it: and he fell upon him, that he died ; Benaiah rushed in upon him with his men, and thrust his sword into him, and killed him; executions used to be done in those times and countries by great personages, as the instances of Gideon, Doeg, and others, show, and not by common executioners. Ver. 26 . And unto Abiathar the priest said the king , etc.] Who was either at court, or he sent for him, and thus addressed him: get thee to Anathoth ; a city of the tribe of Benjamin, given to the priests, (Joshua 21:18); of which place Abiathar might be originally, and whither he is bid to return: unto thine own fields ; which belonged to him there, either by inheritance or purchase; and these he was to mind, and not perform the functions of his office, however as high priest, and at Jerusalem, and the tabernacle there, and still less appear at court, or meddle with state affairs, only to attend to his private domestic concerns: for thou [art] worthy of death ; in joining with Adonijah in the lifetime of David, and setting him up as a king without his knowledge, and in opposition to Solomon, contrary to the will of God, and promise of David, of which he, being high priest, cannot be thought to be ignorant, and for his late confederacy with Adonijah, of which Solomon had knowledge: but I will not at this time put thee to death ; he does not give him a full pardon, only a respite; suggesting, that should he be guilty of any overt act, he would be put to death another time, though not now: because thou barest the ark of the Lord God before David my father ; when he fled from Absalom, (2 Samuel 15:24); and because thou hast been afflicted in all wherein my father was afflicted ; shared with him in all his afflictions under the persecutions of Saul, from the time he slew the priests at Nob, and at the rebellion of Absalom; in each of which he accompanied him, and suffered and sympathized with him.

Ver. 27 . So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the Lord , etc.] He deposed him from his office of high priest, otherwise I suppose he might officiate as a common priest, at least in some of the branches of it; this was done by his own authority as a king, and not as a prophet, as Bellarmine vainly distinguishes; and not by the authority of the college of the, priests, at the instance of Solomon, as Fortunatus Schacchus says f30 for which there is no foundation: that he might fulfil the word of the Lord ; which he might do intentionally, having knowledge of it, or

however eventually: which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh ; of which house Abiathar was, and which, according to that prophecy, was to be demolished, and the priesthood translated from it, which was in the line of Ithamar, to another house, in the line of Eleazar; the word of the Lord, referred to, is in (1 Samuel 2:31-36 3:12-14).

Ver. 28 . Then tidings came to Joab , etc.] Of the death of Adonijah, and the deposition of Abiathar: for Joab had turned after Adonijah ; publicly appeared at his feast, when he was saluted king by him, and others, and privately gave him advice in the affair of Abishag: though he turned not after Absalom ; did not join with him in his rebellion, but faithfully adhered to David; and yet both in his lifetime, and after his death, acted the traitorous part in favour of Adonijah: Ben Gersom gives these words a different sense, as if he was blameworthy in both cases; that he turned after Adonijah to make him king, without consulting David, and having his consent; and he did not turn after Absalom, to deliver him from death, as David commanded him; but the former sense is best: and Joab fled unto the tabernacle of the Lord ; which was at Gibeon, (see 2 Chronicles 1:3); it was four miles from Jerusalem to the north, situated on an hill f31 ; according to Josephus f32 , it was forty furlongs, or five miles, from it; though Kimchi thinks it was the altar in Jerusalem he fled to, which was before the ark, in the tent David made for it; but that is never called the tabernacle of the Lord, only that of Moses: Joab's fleeing hither showed guilt, and that he was in the conspiracy of Adonijah, and was conscious he deserved to die, and now expected it, since Adonijah was put to death; while he remained reprieved or pardoned, he thought himself safe, but now in danger, and therefore fled for it: and caught hold of the horns of the altar ; (see Gill on “ 1 Kings 1:50”).

Ver. 29 . And it was told King Solomon that Joab was fled unto the tabernacle of the Lord , etc.] This account was brought him very probably by some of his courtiers: and, behold, [he is] by the altar ; to which he betook himself for refuge, laying hold on the horns of it: then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, go, fall upon him ; slay him; Josephus says, the orders were to cut off his head; but perhaps it might be only to lay hold on him, and take him thence, and bring him to Solomon to have judgment passed upon him; for the Targum is, “exercise your power over him,” take him into custody; and certain it is that the first orders were not to slay him, at least upon the spot where he was.

Ver. 30 . And Benaiah came to the tabernacle of the Lord , etc.] At Gibeon: and said unto him ; that is, to Joab: thus saith the king, come forth ; meaning, out of the tabernacle; which plainly shows that his orders were not to slay him in it: and he said, nay, but I will die here ; since he must die, he chose to die there; but what was his reason for it is not so clear; the Jews, some of them, say, to save his goods, and that they might come to his heirs, which would have been forfeited to the crown if he had been tried and condemned in a court of judicature; others, that he might be buried with his ancestors, whereas, had he been sentenced to death by the court, he would have been buried in the common place of malefactors; but rather he thought, or at least hoped, he should not die at all; either that, by gaining time, Solomon might be prevailed upon to pardon him; or however that he would not defile that sacred place with his blood; or, if he should die, he chose to die there, as being a sacred place, and so might hope to receive some benefit from it, as to his future state, where sacrifices were offered to atone for sin: and Benaiah brought the king word again, saying, thus said Joab, and thus he answered me ; told me he would not come out, and, if he must die, he would die there.

Ver. 31 . And the king said unto him, do as he hath said, and fall upon him, and bury him , etc.] Let him die where he is, slay him upon the spot, and then bury him; not by the altar, but in his own sepulchre, as later related, that in, give orders to bury him there; for Benaiah being a priest, could not be concerned in the burial of him, and besides it was below the dignity of his office: that thou mayest take away the innocent blood, which Joab shed, from me, and from the house of my father ; which had been too long connived at, and had called for vengeance; and now here was a proper opportunity upon fresh sins committed to avenge it, and so remove the guilt, which lay upon him and his father's house, for not inflicting deserved punishment on him for it.

Ver. 32 . And the Lord shall return his blood upon his own head , etc.] By way of retaliation, blood for blood: who fell upon two men more righteous and better than he ; later named; for though they had been in open rebellion against David, yet had submitted, and were reconciled and received into favour; and even their open crimes were not so bad, Solomon judged, as his secret treacherous murders of innocent persons in cool blood; they were men of more honour and integrity than he was, not so cruel and barbarous, though guilty in other respects: and slew them with the sword, my father not knowing [thereof] ; this is observed to remove

all suspicion, and which doubtless had been entertained by some, that David had an hand in their death; and that Joab did what he did with his knowledge and consent, and by his advice and order; they having been both concerned in rebellion against him, the one under Ishbosheth, and the other under Absalom: [to wit], Abner the son of Ner, captain of the host of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, captain of the host of Judah : the reason of the two hosts, of which they were captains or generals, being thus distinguished, is, because the tribes of Israel were on the side of Ishbosheth, whose general Abner was, in opposition to Judah, who made David their king; and, on the other hand, they were the men of Judah that were first and chiefly in the rebellion of Absalom, whose general Amasa was; of the murder of these two men by Joab, (see 2 Samuel 3:27 20:10).

Ver. 33 . Their blood shall therefore return upon the head of Joab, and upon the head of his seed for ever , etc.] Not only upon Joab, but upon his posterity as long as there would be any; signifying, that Joab's death would not be a sufficient satisfaction, but the punishment of his murders would be continued to his offspring: (see 2 Samuel 3:29); but upon David, and upon his seed, and upon his house, and upon his throne, shall there be peace for ever from the Lord ; such traitors and murderers being removed, peace and happiness might be expected and believed would attend the family and kingdom of David; whether this be considered as a prayer, or a prophecy, it can and will have its full accomplishment only in the kingdom of the Messiah the son of David, of the increase of whose government, and the peace thereof, there shall be no end, (Isaiah 9:7 Psalm 72:7).

Ver. 34 . So Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up , etc.] To Gibeon, which was a great high place, (1 Kings 3:4); and fell upon him, and slew him ; at the altar; or, dragging him from it at some distance, drew his sword and slew him: and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness ; not in his dwelling house strictly taken, but in a garden or field adjoining to it, which house in the wilderness; not a waste place uninhabited; for, as Kimchi observes, this word sometimes signifies a place uninhabited, though not tilled, but left for pasture of cattle; and in such a place might Joab's house be, at least his country house, where he might have a farm, and fields, and cattle, as it is plain he had, (2 Samuel 14:30).

Ver. 35 . And the king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in his room over the host , etc.] Advanced him from being captain of his bodyguards to be general of the army: and Zadok the priest did he put in the room of

Abiathar ; from a common priest he promoted him to the high priesthood; whereby that office was restored to its ancient line, the family of Eleazar, having been in the line of Ithamar for many years; and the prediction of the destruction of Eli's house, made eighty years ago, began to be fulfilled, (1 Samuel 2:31-36).

Ver. 36 . And the king sent and called for Shimei , etc.] Who had cursed his father; he lived at Bahurim, in the tribe of Benjamin, and from thence he sent for him to him, (2 Samuel 16:5); and said unto him, build thee an house in Jerusalem and dwell there , and go not from thence any where ; the orders were to remove from Bahurim to Jerusalem, where he was to provide himself a dwelling house, and there continue, and never go out of the city, at least not further on any side of it than it was to the brook Kidron, which was not more than half a mile from the city. This Solomon ordered, to prevent this man going about in the country sowing and stirring up sedition; and that he might be under his eye and notice, that should he commit any evil, and give him an opportunity of punishing him, he might do it as his father had directed him; and he might judge from the temper of the man, and indeed from the nature of men in general, that what they are forbidden they are the most prone unto, that he would transgress in this case, and give him an occasion against him.

Ver. 37 . For it shall be, [that] on the day thou goest out , etc.] Out of the city of Jerusalem: and passest over the brook Kidron: which is particularly mentioned, because this lay in his way to Bahurim, his native place; he must cross that to go to it, (see 2 Samuel 15:23 16:5); and where it might reasonably be supposed he would some time or another be inclined to go, through business, or a desire to see it again: thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die : it may be depended on as what will be most certainly the case; no reprieve nor pardon will be granted: thy blood shall be on thine own head ; fair warning being given, he could blame none but himself, should he be guilty and suffer.

Ver. 38 . And Shimei said unto the king, the saying [is] good , etc.] It was an act of goodness in the king, and what was good, grateful, and acceptable to him; for being sent for by him, and knowing how he had used his father, and hearing of several traitors being put to death, he expected this would have been his case; and wherefore, instead of being put to death, was only obliged to leave his habitation in the country, and come and live at Jerusalem, a pleasant and delightful city, and the metropolis of the

nation, it was very agreeable to him: as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do ; and he not only promised, but swore to it, which Solomon obliged him to, (1 Kings 2:42); and Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days ; he accordingly built or purchased a house in Jerusalem, and removed from Bahurim to it, where he lived for the space of three years, as follows.

Ver. 39 . And it came to pass, at the end of three years , etc.] He had dwelt at Jerusalem: that two of the servants of Shimei ran away to Achish the son of Maachah king of Gath; and they told Shimei, saying, behold, thy servant [be] in Gath ; he being a churlish, ill-natured man, always cursing or beating them, or imposing too hard service upon them, or not allowing them the necessaries of life; wherefore they broke away from him, and fled to Gath, and put themselves under the protection of the king of that place, who was now at peace with Israel, and a tributary to them: if this Achish was the same that was David's friend, who sheltered him when persecuted by, Saul, he must be an old man; for that was between forty or fifty years ago; and as he seems to be, since he is called the son of Maoch, (1 Samuel 27:2); which may be thought to be the same with Maachah here.

Ver. 40 . And Shimei arose, and saddled his ass, and went to Gath to Achish to seek his servants , etc.] And demand them; through the passion he was in with his servants, and his hurry to get them home, and the covetous disposition which prevailed on him, he might forget, or be tempted to neglect, the prohibition he was under not to go out of Jerusalem; or he might think Solomon had forgot it; or that he could come and go secretly without his knowledge; or if he should know of it, he might hope he would never punish him with death for so small a fault; however, so it was ordered by the providence of God leaving him to his own lust, and the temptations of Satan, that he might suffer just punishment for cursing David: and Shimei went and brought his servants from Gath ; for the king being at peace with Israel, and a tributary to them also, did not choose to detain them, but delivered them up lest it should be resented, and bring him into trouble.

Ver. 41 . And it was told Solomon , etc.] By the spies he set to watch and observe his motions, or by some others who had seen him go out and return, and knew that it was contrary to the king's orders: that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath, and was come again ; which was thirty four miles from Jerusalem f34 ; whereas his utmost bounds, whither he might go, was the brook Kidron, about half a mile from it.

Ver. 42 . And the king sent and called for Shimei , etc.] He sent messengers to him, and by them ordered him to come to him, who accordingly came: and he said unto him, did not I make thee swear by the Lord ; which, though not before mentioned, was no doubt done, nor did Shimei deny it: and protested unto thee ; that is, declared before witnesses: saying, know for certain, that on the day thou goest out ; namely, out of the city of Jerusalem: and walkest abroad any whither ; further at most than the brook Kidron, or any other place equally distant from Jerusalem, on any side of it; for when he went to Gath, he did not go over Kidron, but went the road the other way around. Kidron lay to the east, and Gath to the west of Jerusalem: now the protestation made to him was, that if he went out of Jerusalem any way, that thou shalt surely die ; it would be sure and certain death to him: and thou saidst unto me, the word [that] I have heard [is] good ; not only he promised to obey it, and that with an oath, but declared it was agreeable and acceptable to him, and therefore the offence was a very aggravated one.

Ver. 43 . Why then hast thou not kept the oath of the Lord , etc.] Which was made by him, and in his presence, and in which he was appealed to, and so by not keeping it was guilty of perjury: and the commandment that I have charged thee with ? and so guilty of disobedience to him as his sovereign; for which two reasons he ought to die.

Ver. 44 . The king said moreover to Shimei , etc.] Not as another reason for his putting him to death, but to remind him of his former sins, and to observe to him the providence of God in suffering him to fall into others, that justice might take place upon him for them also: thou knowest all the wickedness which thine heart is privy to, that thou didst to David my father ; which conscience must bear witness to, and accuse him of, not only of the words and actions themselves uttered and done by him, but of the malice and wickedness from whence they sprung: therefore the Lord shall return thy wickedness upon thine own head ; the punishment of it; which though not directly inflicted for that, yet in providence was brought about as a just retaliation for it.

Ver. 45 . And King Solomon [shall be] blessed , etc.] With a long and peaceable reign, and large dominions, notwithstanding all the attempts to make him unhappy: and the throne of David shall be established before the Lord for ever ; the kingdom of David over Judah for a long time, in his

natural line; and the kingdom of Israel, spiritual Israel, for ever in his son the Messiah; and that in the presence of the Lord, he observing, ordering, and succeeding all things to that purpose.

Ver. 46 . So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, which went out , etc.] From the presence of the king, and took Shimei with him to the proper place of execution, it not being fitting to execute him before the king: and fell upon him, that he died ; put him to death by the sword: and the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon ; Adonijah the usurper, and Joab the general of the army, who took on his side, being both put to death; and Abiathar the high priest deposed, who was in the same conspiracy; and Shimei, a dangerous and troublesome man, dispatched, there remained none to give any disturbance; so that he now sat easy and quiet on his throne, and things with respect to the civil government were on a firm and settled foundation.

CHAPTER - INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 3

This chapter relates the marriage of Solomon with Pharaoh's daughter, (1 Kings 3:1); his piety and devotion, (1 Kings 3:2-4); his prayer for wisdom and understanding, which was acceptable to God, who promised to grant his request, with an addition to it, (1 Kings 3:5-15); an instance and proof of the wisdom given him in determining a case between two harlots brought before him, which greatly raised his reputation, and gave him reverence among his people, (1 Kings 3:16-28).

Ver. 1 . And Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt , etc.] Pharaoh was a common name of the kings of Egypt, of whom no mention is made in Scripture from the times of Moses until this time; which may seem strange, when it is considered that that kingdom was a potent one, and near the land of Canaan; but it was governed by a race of kings in this period of time, of whom, as Diodorus Siculus says, there is nothing worthy of relation. The name of this Pharaoh, according to Eupolemus f36 , an Heathen writer, was Vaphres; for he says, that David contracted a friendship with this king, and he relates some letters which passed between him and Solomon, concerning sending him workmen for the building of the temple, which are still preserved; but Calvisius thinks it was Sesostris; what this affinity was is next observed: and took Pharaoh's daughter : that is, married her; who, according to Ben Gersom, was proselyted first to the Jewish religion; which is very probable, or otherwise it can hardly

be thought Solomon would marry her; and as the forty fifth psalm, (Psalm 45:1-17), and the book of Canticles, supposed to be written on that occasion, seem to confirm; to which may be added, that it does not appear she ever enticed or drew him into idolatry; for, of all the idols his wives drew him into the worship of, no mention is made of any Egyptian deities. The Jews say Rome was built the same day Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter, but without foundation: this was not Solomon's first wife; he was married to Naamah the Ammonitess before he was king, for he had Rehoboam by her a year before that for Solomon reigned only forty years, and Rehoboam, who succeeded him, was forty one years of age when he began to reign, (1 Kings 11:41 14:21); and brought her into the city of David ; the fort of Zion: until he had made an end of building his own house : which was thirteen years in building, and now seems to have been begun, (1 Kings 7:1); and the house of the Lord ; the temple, which according: to the Jewish chronology f39 , was begun building before his marriage of Pharaoh's daughter, and was seven years in building; and therefore this marriage must be in the fourth year of his reign; for then he began to build the temple, (1 Kings 6:37,38); and so it must be, since Shimei lived three years in Jerusalem before he was put to death, after which this marriage was, (Kings 2:37); and the wall of Jerusalem round about ; all which he built by raising a levy on the people, (1 Kings 9:15); and when these buildings were finished, he built a house for his wife, but in the mean while she dwelt in the city of David.

Ver. 2 . Only the people sacrificed in high places , etc.] On the tops of their houses, on hills and mountains, and particularly at the high place in Gibeon, where the tabernacle was: because there was no house built unto the name of the Lord until those days ; to which they were obliged to repair as afterwards, and there offer their sacrifices, as the Lord had commanded, (Deuteronomy 12:5,6).

Ver. 3 . And Solomon loved the Lord , etc.] The worship of the Lord, as the Targum: and which he showed by walking in the statutes of David his father ; in which his father walked, which were the statutes of the Lord, or which he exhorted him to walk in, and were the same, (1 Kings 2:3); only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places ; besides that at Gibeon, which it seems David did not.

Ver. 4 . And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there , etc.] About four or five miles from Jerusalem; (see Gill on “ 1 Kings 2:28”); for that [was]

the great high place ; not that the place itself might be higher than others that were used; but here were the tabernacle of Moses, and the altar; so that it was a more dignified place, and more sacred because of them: a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar ; the brazen altar of burnt offerings there; not at one time, but on several days successively; though Jarchi says on one day; and which was a prodigious number, never was known the like, unless at the dedication of the temple, (1 Kings 8:63,64).

Ver. 5 . In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night , etc.] This was not a common natural dream, but an extraordinary, divine, and supernatural one, a prophetic dream, a night vision, such as God used to speak in to his prophets; in which he had the full use of his reasoning powers, was under divine impressions, and in a spiritual frame of mind, and in the exercise of grace; it was not a mere dream that the Lord did appear to him, but he really did appear to him while sleeping and dreaming, by some display of his glory in some way or another: and God said, ask what I shall give thee ; he did not hereby dream that God said to him, but he really did say this; bid him ask what he would and it should be given him; he knew what he designed to give, but he would have it asked of him, as he will be inquired of by all his people to do that for them which he has intended and provided for them; and it is encouragement enough for them to ask, since he has promised to give.

Ver. 6 . And Solomon said , etc.] In his dream; not that he dreamt he said, when he did not; but he really said, as follows: thou hast showed unto thy servant David my father great mercy ; bestowed many favours and blessings upon him, both temporal and spiritual: according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee ; in the truth of doctrine and worship, according to the revealed will and word of God, and which he observed with great strictness, living soberly, righteously, and godly, though not without failings and imperfections, yet with great integrity and sincerity; and this holy walk of his was not the cause of God's showing mercy to him, nor was it in proportion to that, but what he was influenced to by the mercy that was shown him: and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as [it is] this day ; a son to be his successor, meaning himself; which was an additional favour to all the rest, and was in reserve, and now bestowed, as time had made to appear.

Ver. 7 . And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king

instead of David my father , etc.] Removed by death, in whose stead he reigned by the appointment of God, and through his overruling providence, notwithstanding the attempts made to prevent it, and therefore to God he ascribes it: and I [am but] a little child ; not in age and stature, but in knowledge and understanding; for though his father called him a wise man, and he was judged so by others, and really was one, yet in his own opinion and thought of himself such was his modesty and humility, that he was but a child as to his intellectual powers and capacity for government: some understand this of age; and the Jews commonly say he was but twelve years of age when he was anointed king, which they reckon thus; that he was born at the time that Ammon ravished Tamar, two years after which was Absalom's sheep shearing, when he slew Amnon, on which he fled to Geshur, and was there three years; here are five years; he returned thence and was at Jerusalem two years; lo, seven years; he rebelled and was slain, and after that there was a famine of three years, which make ten; and in the year following David numbered the people, which was nine or ten months in doing; the next year he died, which was the fortieth of his reign, in all twelve years; so reckon Jarchi and Kimchi; and Eupolemus, an Heathen writer ^{f40} , is express for it, who says, that David, when he had reigned forty years, delivered up the kingdom to Solomon his son, being then twelve years of age, which he must receive from the tradition of the Jews; the same is said by several of the ancient fathers, as Ignatius and Jerom ^{f42} ; but this cannot be fact; for, if so, his son Rehoboam must be born to him when he was but eleven years of age; (see Gill on " 1 Kings 3:5"); it is best therefore to interpret this of the sense he had of the weakness of his understanding, and of his incapacity for government, as the next clause explains it: I know not [how] to go out or come in ; in the administration of government, to execute his office as a king, in allusion to shepherds, as kings are sometimes called, going in and out before their sheep.

Ver. 8 . And thy servant [is] in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen , etc.] To be his special and peculiar people above all people on the earth; this is not to be understood locally, though Jerusalem, where his palace was, was in the middle of the land; but of the exercise of his office, he being placed over the people, and among them, and having the care and inspection of them: a great people, that cannot be numbered and counted for multitude ; being for number as the stars in the sky, and as the sand upon the seashore, as had been promised.

Ver. 9 . Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart, to judge thy people , etc.] Not an understanding of things spiritual, nor of things natural, though both were given him, but of things political, what related to the civil government, that he might be able to judge or rule the people of Israel in the best manner: that I may discern between good and bad ; not merely between moral good and evil, of which he had a discernment; but between right and wrong in any case or controversy that came before him between man and man, that so he might be able to pass a right sentence, and do justice to every one: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people ? who are so very numerous, and have so many causes to be heard and and those many of them very intricate and difficult; so that no man is equal to such arduous work, unless he has more than an ordinary capacity given him by the Lord.

Ver. 10 . And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing .] Understanding in the affairs of civil government; since he had respect not to his own private benefit and advantage, but the good of the people he governed, and the honour and glory of God, who had set him over them, they being his chosen people, and whose vicegerent he was.

Ver. 11 . And God said unto him , etc.] Being yet in a dream: because thou hast asked this thing ; wisdom for government: and hast not asked for thyself long life ; which is naturally desired by men, and always reckoned a great temporal blessing, and especially to be wished for by a king living in great pomp and splendour: neither hast asked riches for thyself ; to support his grandeur; for though David his father had left him much, yet not for himself, but for the building of the temple: nor hast asked the life of thine enemies ; victory over them, and to have it in his power to take away their lives when he pleased; which kings, and especially tyrants, are desirous of, such as are ambitious, haughty, and revengeful: but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment ; where the right of a cause lay, that so he might make a right judgment of it, and pass a righteous sentence, a sentence not to the injury of any.

Ver. 12 . Behold, I have done according to thy words , etc.] Expressed in his request: he not only promised he would grant him it, but he had already done it, or at least had begun to do it: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart ; had greatly increased his wisdom and understanding in things political, things respecting civil government, and also in things natural, in the knowledge of the things of nature as appears

from (1 Kings 4:33); and of the arts and sciences: so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee : which some restrain to kings, and to the kings of Israel; that there were none of the kings before him, as Saul and David, like him for wisdom, nor any of the kings of Judah and Israel after him; but it may include all men of all nations in the world, since he is said to be wiser than all men; and some other nations, and particular men of other nations, famous for wisdom, are expressly mentioned as inferior to him, (Kings 4:30,31); but then this must be understood of men since the fall; for Adam, doubtless, had a larger stock of knowledge and understanding in his state of innocence than ever Solomon had; and it must be restrained to political and natural knowledge; for, as for divine knowledge, Kimchi excepts Moses; and we may well except the apostles of Christ for spiritual and evangelical knowledge; and as for our Lord, the antitype of Solomon, he is greater than him in all kind of knowledge, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge being hid in him, (see Matthew 12:42 Colossians 2:3).

Ver. 13 . And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked , etc.] That is, intended to give him, and now promised it, and was about to bestow it on him: both riches and honour ; the former through the presents and tribute of the nations about him, and his trading to foreign parts; and the latter chiefly through his wisdom, the fame of which was spread everywhere: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days ; that is, none like him for riches and honour among all the kings of the neighbouring nations so long as he lived; though there might be kings in later times as rich, or richer than he, as Croesus, Alexander, etc. but then not so honourable as he; so, putting both together, there were no kings like him before or after, and especially if wisdom be added to them, as in (Chronicles 1:12).

Ver. 14 . And if thou wilt walk in my ways , etc.] Prescribed and directed to in his word, to keep my statutes and my commandments ; ceremonial, moral, and judicial: as thy father David did walk ; which Solomon himself had observed, (Kings 3:6); and whose walk was worthy of his imitation: then I will lengthen thy days ; the other promises of riches and honour are absolute, but this of long life conditional, depending upon his holy walk and conversation; and hence, because he failed in this the Jews observe he did not attain to long life, dying, as they suppose, at fifty two years of age; which is grounded on a wrong hypothesis, that he was but twelve years of age when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years,

as before observed.

Ver. 15 . And Solomon awoke, and, behold, [it was] a dream , etc.] Not that it was nothing but a dream, a natural one, a vain and empty one, but a divine and supernatural one, a dream of prophecy, as the Jews call it, or a prophetic dream; a true one, which had its full accomplishment in him, the truth of which he perceived as soon as he awoke; for he found himself possessed of such a measure of wisdom and knowledge he never had before, which occasioned the thanksgiving and joy next expressed: and he came to Jerusalem ; from Gibeon, accompanied by his nobles and servants: and stood before the ark of the covenant the Lord ; which was in a tent David had pitched for it there, (2 Samuel 6:17); here he stood with holy reverence, as in the presence of the Lord, and as a servant of his, to minister to him, and as a worshipper of him, with a heart full of gratitude for the great things he had done for him, and promised to him: and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings ; by way of thankfulness for his quiet settlement in the for the Lord's appearance to him at Gibeon, and what he had already given, and promised to give: and made a feast to all his servants ; in a way of joy and gladness for the above layouts; this feast was either the part of the peace offerings he offered, which belonged to the offerer to eat with his friends, or this was a special feast made at his own palace for his courtiers.

Ver. 16 . Then came there two women [that] were harlots unto the king , etc.] The same day, as Abarbinel thinks, the night before which the Lord had appeared to Solomon; this came to pass through the providence of God, that there should be immediately an instance and proof of the wisdom and understanding the Lord had given to Solomon; these women, according to the Targum, were victuallers or inn keepers; and so Ben Gersom thinks they were sellers of food, as Rahab; though he observes it is possible they might, prostitute themselves: this may be said in their favour, that common prostitutes do not usually bear children, or, when they do, take no care of them, have no affection for them, and much less are fond of them, as these seem to be; but, on the other hand, no mention being made of their husbands, and living together in one house, and alone, and being impudent, brawling, and litigious, give great suspicion of the truth of the character they bear in our version and others: and stood before him ; to lay their case before him, and each plead their own cause; it may be, it had been tried in another court before, and could not be determined, and so was brought to the king; and, if so, the wisdom of Solomon was the more

conspicuous, in deciding it in the manner he did.

Ver. 17 . And the one woman said , etc.] Who was the plaintiff: O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house ; pointing to the defendant, who stood by her: and I was delivered of a child with her in the house ; she being present at the delivery, and she only, as it should seem.

Ver. 18 . And it came to pass, the third day after I was delivered , etc.] Of a child, as before expressed: that this woman was delivered also ; of another child; and being both of the same sex, both sons, as afterwards appears; and being so nearly of an age, it was difficult to distinguish them; and we [were] together; [there was] no stranger with us in the house , save we two in the house ; so that in this trial no evidences could be produced on either side.

Ver. 19 . And this woman's child died in the night , etc.] Whether the same night following the day it was born is not certain; because she overlaid it ; or laid upon it, being heavy through sleep, and not knowing what she did, turned herself upon it, and smothered it; because it had no previous illness, or any marks of any disease it could be thought to die of, and perhaps there might be some of its being overlaid.

Ver. 20 . And she arose at midnight , etc.] Perceiving what she had done, that she had overlaid her child, and it was dead; either through fear of punishment inflicted on persons thus negligent, or because of the disgrace of it, taking no more care of her child, she made use of the following stratagem: and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept ; this served to puzzle the cause, for how could she know what she did when she was asleep? this she could not prove, it was only conjecture: and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom ; where she found it in the morning; but still what proof was there that it was the other woman's, and not her own, that lay dead in her bosom?

Ver. 21 . And when I rose in the morning to give my child suck , etc.] As she used to do: behold, it was dead ; her own child, as she thought at first: but when I had considered it in the morning ; it was towards morning, or just at break of day, when she arose to suckle it, and found it dead: but when it was broad day, and the light of the morning was increased, she more narrowly viewed it, and by its features, or some marks she had observed; behold, it was not my son which I did bear : she was

fully satisfied it was not her own child, but another. Ver. 22 . And the other woman said , etc.] The defendant: nay, but the living [is] my son, and the dead [is] thy son ; she denied what the other said, but offered nothing in proof of it: and this said ; she who was the plaintiff replied in the same language: no: but the dead [is] thy son, and the living [is] my son ; without being able to add anything in confirmation of what she had deposed: thus they spake before the king ; several times, over and over again, what is before expressed, having nothing to produce on either side in proof of their assertions; so that it was very difficult to determine to whom the living child belonged.

Ver. 23 . Then said the king , etc.] As judge, summing up what had been said on both sides, which were only bare assertions without proof; the one affirming what the other denied, and the other denying what the other affirmed: the one saith, this [is] my son that liveth, and thy son [is] the dead ; and the other saith nay; but thy son [is] the dead, and my son [is] the living ; this he repeated to show to all present that no determination could be made by what had been said on each side, and that some other method must be taken.

Ver. 24 . And the king said, bring me a sword , etc.] The design of which might not at first appear to the court, and it might be thought strange, and greatly wondered at: what should be the meaning of it: and they brought a sword before the king ; his commands were obeyed.

Ver. 25 . And the king said , etc.] To one of his officers: divide the living child in two ; not that he meant it should be actually done, though it might at first be thought he really intended it, and so strike the minds of some with horror, as it did, however, the mother; but he ordered this, to try the affections of the women, and thereby come to the true knowledge of the affair; though, some think he knew it before by their countenances and manner of speech, but that he was desirous all present might see it, and be satisfied of it: and give half to the one, and half to the other ; since both claimed it. Ver. 26 . Then spake the woman, whose the living child [was], unto the king , etc.] In haste, and with great vehemency, lest the executioner should at once dispatch it: (for her bowels yearned upon her son) ; not being able to bear to see his life taken away: and she said, O my lord : or, “on me f43 , my lord”; let the sin, the lie that I have told, be on me, and the punishment of it; she rather chose to be reckoned a liar, and to endure any punishment such an offence deserved, than that her child

should be cut asunder: give her the living child, and in no wise slay it ; being willing to part with her interest in it, rather than it should be put to death: but the other said, let it be neither mine nor thine, [but] divide [it] ; for as she knew it was not her own, she had no affection for it, nor desire to have it; chose rather to be clear of the expense of keeping and nursing it, and would, by its being put to death, be avenged of her adversary, who had brought this cause before the king.

Ver. 27 . Then the king answered and said, give her the living child , and in no wise slay it , etc.] That is, to her who desired it might not be slain, but rather be given to her who had no right to it: she [is] the mother thereof ; which might be strongly concluded from her compassion for it, her eagerness and earnestness to have its life spared, and from the indifference of the other, yea, from her cruelty and barbarity in moving to have it divided.

Ver. 28 . And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged , etc.] In the above case; the decision of it was divulged throughout the land, and the fame of it was spread everywhere: and they feared the king ; revered him as a wise, judicious, and faithful king, and feared to do anything of a criminal nature, as perceiving that he was so sagacious and penetrating, that he would discover it quickly, and bring them to shame and punishment: for they saw that the wisdom of God [was] in him to do judgment ; that God had put more than ordinary wisdom into him, to make a right judgment in causes that came before him, and finish them in the most just and equitable manner.

CHAPTER - INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 4

As in the preceding chapter we have a proof of the wisdom and understanding which the Lord gave to Solomon, as promised, so in this an account is given of the riches and honour he was possessed of; of him, as king over all Israel, and of his princes, (1 Kings 4:1-6); of the providers of food for his household in the several parts of the land, (1 Kings 4:7-19); of the largeness and extent of his dominions, and of the peace and prosperity thereof, (1 Kings 4:20,21,24,25); of his daily provisions for his household and for his cattle, (1 Kings 4:22,23,26-28); and of his superior wisdom and knowledge to all others in all nations, which brought some out of all to hear it, (1 Kings 4:29-34).

Ver. 1 . So King Solomon was king over all Israel .] As David his father was not at first, only over Judah, and as Solomon's successors were not, after the division of the kingdom under his son Rehoboam; though this seems to have a particular respect to what is related in the preceding chapter concerning the wisdom of Solomon, for which he was so famous, that he reigned by the consent of all, and in the hearts of all the people of Israel.

Ver. 2 . And these [were] the princes which he had , etc.] That were in office about him, in the highest posts of honour and trust: Azariah the son of Zadok the priest : or rather his grandson, since Ahimaaz was the son of Zadok, and Azariah the son of Ahimaaz, (1 Chronicles 6:8,9); though another Zadok may be meant, and his son not a priest but a prince, as the word may be rendered, and was Solomon's prime minister of state, and the rather, since he is mentioned first.

Ver. 3 . Elihoreph and Ahiah, the sons of Shisha, scribes , etc.] Their father Shisha, the same with Sheva, was scribe only in David's time; and he being dead very probably, both his sons were continued in the office as secretaries of state, Solomon having more business for such an office, (see 2 Samuel 20:25); Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the recorder ; who was in the same office in the times of David, and now held it under Solomon, (2 Samuel 8:16 20:24).

Ver. 4 . And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada [was] over the host , etc.] General of the army in the room of Joab, (1 Kings 2:35); and Zadok and Abiathar [were] the priests ; so they were when Solomon came to the throne; but Abiathar was deposed by him after some time, though he might retain the name afterwards, and be employed, as Ben Gersom thinks, in case of necessity, in the room of Zadok, or, however, be employed as a common priest at Jerusalem, upon a reconciliation with Solomon; though Kimchi thinks another Abiathar is meant, which is not so likely.

Ver. 5 . And Azariah the son of Nathan [was] over the officers , etc.] The twelve officers who provided food for Solomon's household after mentioned: and Zabud the son of Nathan ; another of the sons of Nathan the prophet: for he being a principal instrument of settling Solomon on the throne, had interest enough to promote his sons to the chief places of honour and trust: and this here [was] principal officer, [and] the king's friend ; a chief minister about him, very intimate with him, that kept him

company, privately conversed with him, was in his secrets, and admitted to great privacy and nearness to him.

Ver. 6 . And Abiathar [was] over the household , etc.] Steward of the household: and Adoniram the son of Abda [was] over the tribute , over those that collected the tribute, as the Targum, whether from the people of Israel or other nations, or both; this man was in the same post in David's time, (Samuel 20:24).

Ver. 7 . And Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel , etc.] Not with respect to the twelve tribes of Israel, for it does not appear that they had each of them a tribe under them, but some particular places in a tribe; but with respect to the twelve months of the year, in which each took his turn: which provided victuals for the king and his household: each man his month in a year made provision ; furnished food of all sorts out of the country in which they presided for the space of one month in a year; by which means there was always a plenty of provisions at court for the king's family, and for all strangers that came and went, and no one part of the land was burdened or drained, nor the price of provisions raised; these seem to be the twelve "phylarchi", or governors of tribes, Eupolemus f44 , an Heathen writer, speaks of, before whom, and the high priest, David delivered the kingdom to Solomon; though in that he was mistaken, that they were in being then, since these were officers of Solomon's creating.

Ver. 8 . And these [are] their names , etc.] Or rather the names of their fathers; for of many of them not their own names but their fathers' names are given, as being well known: the son of Hur, in Mount Ephraim ; a fruitful country in the tribe of Ephraim, from whence this officer was to furnish the king with provisions for one month in the year.

Ver. 9 . The son of Dekar in Makaz , etc.] A place in the tribe of Dan, on the borders of it: and in Shaalbim, and Bethshemesh, and Elonbethhanan ; all in the same tribe, (see Joshua 19:41-43).

Ver. 10 . The son of Heshed in Aruboth , etc.] Which seems to have been in the tribe of Judah by the places that follow: to him [pertained] Sochoh ; there were two places of this name in that tribe, (Joshua 15:35,48); and all the land of Hephher : there was an Hephher in the land of Canaan, which was a royal city in the times of the Canaanites, (Joshua 12:17); and there was an Hephher, the name of a man, a descendant of Judah, to whom, very

probably, this land belonged, (1 Chronicles 4:6); unless it can be thought to be the portion of land given to the daughters of Hephher, (Joshua 17:3).

Ver. 11 . The son of Abinadab in all the region of Dor , etc.] The same with Dor and her towns, belonged to the half tribe of Manasseh, on this side Jordan, (Joshua 17:11); which had Taphath the daughter of Solomon to wife ; not when he was first put into this office, when, in all probability, Solomon had not a daughter marriageable; but behaving well in it, in process of time he bestowed a daughter of his on him.

Ver. 12 . Baana the son of Ahilud, [to him pertained] Taanach and Megiddo, and all Bethshean , etc.] All which were places in the tribe of Manasseh, (Joshua 17:11); which [is] by Zartanah beneath Jezreel ; so described, to distinguish it, as is thought, from Zaretan in (Joshua 3:16); and the country this officer presided over reached also from Bethshean to Abelmeholah, [even] unto [the place that is] beyond Jokneam ; the two first of these were in the tribe of Manasseh, and the last in the tribe of Zebulun, (Joshua 19:11).

Ver. 13 . The son of Geber in Ramothgilead , etc.] A city in the tribe of Gad, and was a city of refuge, (Joshua 20:8); to him [pertained] the towns of Jair the son of Manasseh, which [are] in Gilead ; of which (see Numbers 32:41); to him [also pertained] the region of Argob, which [is] in Bashan , threescore great cities with walls, and brasen bars ; called by Josephus f45 Ragaba, beyond Jordan; (see Gill on “ Deuteronomy 3:4”).

Ver. 14 . Ahinadab the son of Iddo [had] Mahanaim .] Another city on the other side Jordan, where both Ishbosheth and David sometimes dwelt, (2 Samuel 2:8 17:2-4); this and the places adjacent must be very fruitful, since this officer was to furnish the king with provisions for a month once a year from hence, Ver. 15 . Ahimaaz [was] in Naphtali , etc.] Out of that tribe he made a monthly provision annually: he also took Basmath the daughter of Solomon to wife ; another daughter of Solomon's, in course of time; (see Gill on “ 1 Kings 4:11”).

Ver. 16 . Baanah the son of Hushai [was] in Asher , etc.] In the tribe of Asher; a very plentiful tribe, particularly for oil; this officer was perhaps the son of Hushai, the Archite, David's friend, and, it may be, promoted for his sake: and in Aloth ; which signifies ascensions, mountains went upon by steps; near to this place was an high mountain, called the ladder of Tyre f46

; perhaps that and the parts adjacent may be meant here.

Ver. 17 . Jehoshaphat the son of Paruah in Issachar .] In the tribe of Issachar; he had the whole tribe at his command to make a monthly provision out of for the king once a year, as had the preceding officer and the following one.

Ver. 18 . Shimei the son of Elah in Benjamin .] So described, to distinguish him from that Shimei that cursed David, who was of the same tribe; (see Gill on “ 2 Samuel 16:5”).

Ver. 19 . Geber the son of Uri [was] in the country of Gilead , etc.] Which was beyond Jordan, and inhabited by the tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh; this must be understood of all the country, excepting what was under the jurisdiction of the son of Geber, (1 Kings 4:13); and which had been the country of Sihon king of the Amorites, and of Og king of Bashan ; until it was taken from them by Moses, (Numbers 21:25); and [he was] the only officer which [was] in the land ; which is not true of Geber; for there was another officer in the land of Gilead besides him, the son of Geber before observed, unless it should be rendered “in that land”, in that part of the land he had; but then the same might have been observed of all the rest of the officers: the words may be rendered best, “and there was one officer in the land”; which some understand of one officer over all the rest, Azariah the son of Nathan, (1 Kings 4:5); but it seems best what other Jewish writers say f47 , that this was another officer appointed for the intercalated month; when there were thirteen months in the year, there was an officer in the land fixed for that month to make provision out of the land; perhaps any where, where he pleased, being not limited to any certain place. These twelve providers for Solomon’s family were emblems of the twelve apostles of Christ, appointed to provide food for his family, the church; and if you add to them the Apostle Paul, it will make thirteen, as this officer did.

Ver. 20 . Judah and Israel [were] many, as the sand which [is] by the sea in multitude , etc.] Being blessed with great fruitfulness in their families, and having no pestilential disease among them, nor wars to lessen their number, and so the promise to Abraham was fulfilled, (Genesis 22:17); and which was an emblem of Christ’s spiritual subjects, especially in the latter day, whom Solomon was a type of, (see Hosea 1:10); eating, and drinking, and making merry ; having a large increase of the fruits of the earth, and

in no fear of any enemies; expressive of the spiritual joy of believers in the kingdom of Christ, and under the word and ordinances, (Song of Solomon 2:3,4 5:1 Romans 5:2,3,11 14:17).

Ver. 21 . And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms , etc.] Not only over Judah and Israel, but all people round about him, they standing in fear of him; or who brought him presents, or paid tribute to him, which was an acknowledgment of superiority over them, and doing homage to him: from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt ; that is, from the river Euphrates, as the Targum, which was the border of his proper domains to the east, to Palestine, inhabited by the Philistines, which lay to the west, and as far as the border of Egypt, which was the southern boundary; a like and larger extent of Christ's kingdom is given, (Psalm 72:8 Zechariah 9:10); and they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life ; this explains in what sense other kingdoms besides were ruled by Solomon, and subject to him; of Christ his antitype, (see Psalm 72:10,11).

Ver. 22 . And Solomon's provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour , etc.] The measure here used was the "corus", or "cor", the same with the homer, which was equal to ten ephahs, and, according to Bishop Cumberland f48 , held seventy five wine gallons and five pints, and somewhat more; by which may be known how many gallons of fine flour these thirty measures held, which were all consumed in one day: and threescore measures of meal : sixty measures of a coarser sort, for the servants, not so finely dressed; the same measure is here used as before; and it is observed by some, that one cor is equivalent to six hundred forty eight Roman pounds, and allowing to one man two pounds a day for his food, there would be food enough for 29,160 men out of 90 times 648, or 58,320 pounds f49 . Others exaggerate the account; Vilalpandus says it would have sufficed 48,600 persons; Seth Calvisius 54,000, and Salianus 70,000 f50 ; the Jews say that he had 60,000 that ate at his table; that is, who were maintained at his court.

Ver. 23 . Ten fat oxen , etc.] Such as were kept up in the stall and fatted: and twenty oxen out of the pastures ; which were killed as they were taken from thence, and not put up to be fed: and an hundred sheep ; out of the folds: beside harts, and roebucks, and fallow deer ; which were clean creatures, according to the Levitical law, (Deuteronomy 14:5); these were hunted in fields, or taken out of the park, or were presents from other

countries; so that here was plenty of beef, mutton, and venison: for the spiritual application of this to the antitypical Solomon, and his provisions, (see Matthew 22:4); and fatted fowl ; such as we call capons f52 ; some Jewish writers f53 , because of the likeness of sound in the word here used, take them to be Barbary fowls, or such as were brought from that country: there is a sort of birds called barbaroi , which were without a voice, that neither heard men, nor knew their voice f54 .

Ver. 24 . For he had dominion over all [the region] on this side the river , etc.] Or beyond the river Euphrates, in the sense before given, (1 Kings 4:21); which accounts for the plenty of provisions he had, and the revenue with which he supported such a table he kept: from Tiphseh even to Azzah ; or Gaza, one of the five principalities of the Philistines. Tiphseh is thought to be the Thapsacus of Pliny which both he and Ptolemy place near the river Euphrates, since called Amphipolis; the former places it in Syria, the latter in Arabia Deserta; and which Strabo f57 , from Eratosthenes, describes as 4800 furlongs or six hundred miles from Babylon, and from the place where Mesopotamia begins not less than two thousand furlongs or two hundred and fifty miles: over all the kings on this side the river ; the river Euphrates, or beyond it, in the sense before explained, as the kings of Syria, Arabia, etc. and he had peace on all sides round about him ; in which he was a type of Christ, the Prince of peace.

Ver. 25 . And Judah and Israel dwelt safely , etc.] Without fear of any injury done to their persons or properties by any enemy; which is, and will be, more abundantly fulfilled in Christ, the antitype of Solomon, (Jeremiah 23:5); every man under his vine, and under his fig tree ; which were principal trees in the land of Judea, put for all the rest; and the phrase denotes the happy, safe, quiet, full, and peaceable enjoyment of all outward blessings, and is used of the times of the Messiah, (Micah 4:4); from Dan even to Beersheba ; which were the two extremities of the land of Israel, north and south: all the days of Solomon ; so long this peace and safety continued, there being no wars in his time.

Ver. 26 . And Solomon had forty thousand stalls for horses , etc.] In (Chronicles 9:25); it is only four thousand; and therefore some think that here is a mistake of the copier, of “arbaim”, forty, for “arbah”, four; which it is thought might be through divine permission, in such lesser matters, without any prejudice to the authority of the Scriptures in matters of faith and practice; but without supposing this, a reconciliation may be made,

by observing, that here the writer, as Ben Gersom notes, gives the number of the horses that were in the stables, which were forty thousand, there the stables themselves, which were four thousand, ten horses in a stable; or here he numbers the stalls, which were forty thousand, and there the stables, which were four thousand, there being ten stalls in each; and the word there has the letter “yod” in it more than here, which is the numerical letter for “ten”, and may point thereunto; or here the writer speaks of all the stalls for horses Solomon had throughout the kingdom, there of those only he had in Jerusalem. Benjamin of Tudela affirms, that these stalls, or stables, which Solomon built very strong of large stones, are still in being in Jerusalem, and that there is no building to be seen like it any where; but no other writer speaks of them; nor is it at all probable that they should remain: for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen ; some of the said stalls of horses were for his chariots, to draw in them for various uses, of which had 1400, (1 Kings 10:26); and others to mount twelve thousand horsemen, who were placed in various parts, to defend kingdom.

Ver. 27 . And these officers provided victuals for King Solomon , etc.] The twelve before mentioned; and this is repeated here, after the account of his horses, to observe, that they provided for them also, as well as for the sake of what follows; that the large provision made by them was not only for Solomon’s family and domestic servants, but for strangers from different arts, who came upon messages to him, or to visit him, and to behold the splendour of his court: and for all that came to Solomon’s table ; which was an open table for all comers, as there were some from all parts of the earth, (1 Kings 4:34); every man in his month ; each of the twelve officers provided food in the month assigned to him: they lacked nothing ; they always had enough to supply the king with, and they failed not in the performance of their duty, nor came short of their salaries, being fully and punctually paid them.

Ver. 28 . Barley also, and straw for the horses and dromedaries , etc.] Or rather mules, by comparing the passage with (2 Chronicles 9:24); the particular kind of creatures meant is not agreed on; though all take them to be a swifter sort of creatures than horses; or the swifter of horses, as race horses or posts horses: barley was for their provender, that being the common food of horses in those times and countries, and in others, as Bochart has shown from various writers; and in the Misnah it is called the food of beasts; and Solomon is said to have every day his own horses two hundred thousand Neapolitan measures of called “tomboli” f61 ; so

the Roman soldiers, the horse were allowed a certain quantity of barley for their horses every morning, and sometimes they had money instead of it, which they therefore called “hordiarium” and the “straw” was for the litter of them: these brought them unto the place ; where the officers were; not where the king was, as the Vulgate Latin version; where Solomon was, as the Arabic version, that is, in Jerusalem; nor where [the officers] were ; in their respective jurisdictions, as our version supplies it, which would be bringing them to themselves; but to the place where the beasts were, whether in Jerusalem, or in any, other parts of the kingdom: every man according to his charge : which he was monthly to perform.

Ver. 29 . And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much , etc.] In things natural, moral, divine, and spiritual, and that not slight and superficial, but exceeding deep, and large beyond expression; and this he had not from the acuteness of his genius merely, nor from his industry and diligence; but by the gift of God, as whatsoever solid wisdom and understanding is in any man, it is from the liberal hand of God, the fountain of wisdom, (James 1:5); and largeness of heart, even as sand that [is] on the seashore ; he had a genius and capacity to receive anything; his knowledge was vast and comprehensive; it reached to and included things innumerable, as the sand of the sea; there was scarce anything under the heavens, or on the earth, and in the sea, but came within the compass of it, as what are later mentioned show.

Ver. 30 . And Solomon’s wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east , etc.] The Arabians, and Persians, famous for wisdom, and who lay to the east of the land of Judea; whose wisdom lay in the knowledge of the stars, in divination by birds, and soothsaying f63 : and all the wisdom of Egypt ; which it was eminent for in the times of Moses, and in which he was learned and well-skilled, (Acts 7:22); and hence in later times the philosophers of the Gentiles travelled to get knowledge, as Pherecydes, Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, Plato, and others to Egypt, said to be the mother of arts and sciences f64 .

Ver. 31 . For he was wiser than all men , etc.] Not only that lived in his time, but in ages past since the fall of Adam, and in times to come, especially in natural wisdom and knowledge, in all the branches of it; for though some men excel in some part of knowledge, yet not in all, as Solomon did: than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol ; men of the same names are said to be sons of

Zerah, grandson of Judah, (1 Chronicles 2:6); wherefore these are either other men, or their father had two names; or Mahol here may be an appellative, and describe the character of these then, and point at what they were famous for, as that they were sons of music, piping, and dancing, as Mahol may signify; the Jews have a tradition f65 , that Ethan is Abraham, and Heman Moses, and Chalcol Joseph: and his fame was in all nations round about ; not for his riches and grandeur only, but chiefly for his wisdom.

Ver. 32 . And he spake three thousand proverbs , etc.] Wise sayings, short and pithy sentences, instructive in morality and civil life; these were not written as the book of Proverbs, but spoken only, and were taken from his lips, and spread by those that heard them for the use of others, but in process of time were lost; whereas the above book, being written under divine inspiration, is preserved: and his songs were a thousand and five ; some things that were useful to improve the minds and morals of men he delivered in verse, to make them more pleasant and agreeable, that they might be the more easily received and retained in memory; but of all his songs, the most: excellent is the book of Canticles, called “the Song of Songs”, being divine and spiritual, and dictated by the inspiration of the Spirit of God: he was both a moral philosopher and poet, as well as a botanist and naturalist, and well-skilled in medicine, as the following words suggest, (1 Kings 4:33).

Ver. 33 . And he spake of trees , etc.] Of all trees, herbs, and plants, of the nature, virtues, and use them: from the cedar tree that [is] in Lebanon : a mountain on the northern border of Judea, famous for cedars, the tallest and largest of trees: even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall ; which grew about Jerusalem, and in the mountains of it, as an Arabic writes testifies f66 , the lowest and least herb; so that what is between the cedar and hyssop include trees and plants of every kind and sort: whether the same herb we call hyssop is meant, is not certain; some take it to be mint; others marjoram; some houseleek; others the wallflower; Levinus Lemnius supposes it to be Adiantum, or maiden hair: the Targum interprets it allegorically, that he prophesied of the kings of the house of David in this world, and in the world to come of the Messiah: he spake also of beasts, and of fowls, and of creeping things, and of fishes ; he understood the nature of all sorts of animals in the earth, air, and sea, and discoursed of their names, kinds, qualities, and use, with the greatest ease and perspicuity; the Jews fancy that Aristotle’s History of Animals is his,

which that philosopher came upon, and published it in his own name. Suidas says it was reported that Solomon wrote a book of medicines for all diseases, which was fixed to the entrance of the temple, which Hezekiah took away, because sick people applied to that for cure of their disorders, and neglected to pray to God.

Ver. 34 . And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon , from all kings of the earth , etc.] Who sent their ambassadors to his court to know the truth of what was reported, and bring them some proofs and specimens, by which they might judge of the truth of the relations that had been told them; which perhaps might seem to them to be beyond all belief: which had heard of his wisdom ; for the fame of it was spread everywhere by merchants and travellers, and such sort of persons, who had been at Jerusalem, and were masters of various anecdotes relating to Solomon; which they industriously spread in the several parts of the world they had dealings in.

CHAPTER - INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 5

This chapter relates Solomon's preparation for building the temple: on Hiram, king of Tyre, sending a congratulatory letter to him, he returned another to him, signifying his intention to build an house for God, and requesting him to supply him with timber, and men to work it, (1 Kings 5:1-6); to which Hiram readily agreed, and sent him cedar and fir, and Solomon in return sent him food for his household; and things went on very amicably between them, (1 Kings 5:7-12); the chapter concludes with an account of Solomon's workmen, where, how, and in what they were employed, (1 Kings 5:13-18).

Ver. 1 . And Hiram king of Tyre sent servants unto Solomon , etc.] His ambassadors, to condole him on the death of his father, and congratulate him on his accession to the throne; this king is called by the Phoenician historians Hirom, and by Eupolemus Suron, as he is Hiram in (Chronicles 2:3); and by Theophilus of Antioch Hierom the son of Abelmalus, in the twelfth year of whose reign the temple was built: for he had heard that they had anointed him, king in the room of his father ; that the Israelites had anointed him king: for Hiram was ever a lover of David ; a friend and ally of his; and we never read of the Tyrians being at war with him, or assisting any of his enemies.

Ver. 2 . And Solomon sent to Hiram , etc.] A letter, either by the hand of his ambassadors when they returned, as Kimchi thinks, or by ambassadors Solomon sent on purpose. Josephus appeals to the Tyrian archives for the genuineness of these letters that passed between Hiram and Solomon; and Eupolemus, an Heathen writer has both this which Solomon sent to Hiram, and that which Hiram sent in answer to it, which agree with those in the sacred records: saying : as follows. Ver. 3 . Thou knowest how that David my father could not build an house unto the name of the Lord his God , etc.] As he designed, and was desirous of; and which Hiram might know not only by common fame, but from David himself, between whom there was an intercourse, and that in relation to cedars for building, which David had of Hiram, (2 Chronicles 2:3); for the wars which were about him on every side ; or warriors, as the Targum, the Philistines, Moabites, Edomites, and Syrians: until the Lord put them under the soles of his feet ; made them subject and tributary to him, as he did at length, (see 2 Samuel 7:1 8:1), etc. so the “Cetib”, or textual reading, is; but the “Keri”, or marginal reading, is, “under the soles of my feet”; that is, Solomon’s, which agrees with what follows; it was true of both.

Ver. 4 . But now the Lord my God hath given me rest on every side , etc.] From foreign enemies; for Solomon had no wars with any: [so that there is] neither adversary ; or Satan, no internal enemy in his kingdom, as well as no external ones, Adonijah, Joab, and other illdesigning persons, being cut off: nor evil occurrent ; nothing that rose up, and met him, to discourage or hinder the prosecution of the good work he had in view.

Ver. 5 . And, behold, I purpose to build an house unto the name of the Lord my God , etc.] For his worship, and for his honour and glory: as the Lord spake unto David my father ; by the prophet Nathan, (Samuel 7:12,13); saying, thy son whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build an house unto my name ; which was no small encouragement to Solomon to go about this work; in which he was a type of Christ, the builder of his temple, the church, (see Zechariah 6:12,13).

Ver. 6 . Now therefore command thou that they hew me cedars out of Lebanon , etc.] That is, order his servants to cut them down there for him.

Some think that Lebanon belonged to the land of Israel, and therefore Solomon did not ask for the cedars upon it, but for his servants to hew them for him; but as it lay upon the borders of Israel, part of it might

belong to them, and another part to Hiram, and on which the best cedars might grow, and so he furnished Solomon both with trees, and men to cut them, as it seems from (1 Kings 5:10); see also (2 Chronicles 2:3,8); and my servants shall be with thy servants : to assist them, and to carry the timber from place to place, and to learn how to hew timber: and unto thee will I give hire for thy servants, according to all that thou shalt appoint ; pay them for their work and service, as Hiram himself should judge fit and reasonable for them; no mention being made of paying for the timber, seems to countenance the notion that the trees were Solomon's; but when the quantity of provisions sent yearly to Hiram for his household, besides what the servants had, is observed, it seems to have been sent as an equivalent to the timber received by Solomon, (see Kings 5:10,11); for thou knowest that there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians ; it is not said Tyrians, the Sidonians, perhaps, being more skilful in this than they were; and the Sidonians are said by Homer to be poludaidaloi , very ingenious: and they were both under the jurisdiction and at the command of Hiram; so Eupolemus f75 makes the inscription of Solomon's letter to him to run thus, to Suron (that is, Hiram) king of Tyre, Sidon, and Phoenicia. The Jews being chiefly employed in husbandry, and in feeding cattle, were very unskilful in mechanic arts, and in this of cutting down trees, and hewing timber; for there is skill to be exercised therein; the proper time of cutting down trees should be observed, the part in which they are to be cut, and the position in which they are to be put when cut down, as Vitruvius directs, with other things, and Pliny observes the same.

Ver. 7 . And it came to pass, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon , etc.] The letter read he sent him: that he rejoiced greatly ; that the friendship which had subsisted between him and David was like to be continued between him and his successor, but chiefly for what follows: saying, blessed [be] the Lord this day ; or Jehovah, by which he seems to have some knowledge of the true God, the God of Israel, and might worship him, though along with him other deities, as some Heathen princes did: which hath given unto David a wise son over this great people ; which he perceived by the letter he sent him, and by his solicitous concern to build an house for the worship and honour of God, and by various other things which his ambassadors reported to him they had seen and heard in Solomon's court.

Ver. 8 . And Hiram sent to Solomon , etc.] A letter to him, to the

following purpose: saying, I have considered the things which thou sentest to me for ; whether he could, and whether it was fitting he should grant his request; which was acting like a wise and prudent prince: [and] I will do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar, and concerning timber of fir ; or of cypress, as in Josephus's copy of this letter, and which grew on Lebanon f78 ; these were odorous, sound, and durable timber, especially the cedar, and therefore chosen by Solomon for building.

Ver. 9 . My servants shall bring [them] down from Lebanon unto the sea , etc.] The Mediterranean sea, on which Tyre stood: and I will convey them by sea in floats ; which were either a sort of carriage for the timber the Tyrians and Sidonians had, being furnished with various navigable vessels; or these were the timber itself, and the planks of it, which being fastened together, were set afloat under the direction of some boats with oars, of which they had plenty: unto the place that thou shalt appoint me ; which was Joppa, as appears from (2 Chronicles 2:16); belonging to the land of Israel, in the same sea: and will cause them to be discharged there ; either to be unloaded from the vessels, or to be unloosed and taken up separately: and thou shalt receive [them] ; by his servants appointed there to bring them to Jerusalem, which was forty miles from Joppa: and thou shalt accomplish my desire in giving food for my household ; signifying, that all that he desired in return was, that he would supply him with corn or wheat, which he stood in need of, and his letter in Josephus f79 expresses; and we find in later times this place was supplied with bread corn from Judea, (see Ezra 3:7 Ezekiel 27:17) (Acts 12:20). Ver. 10 . So Hiram, gave Solomon cedar trees, and fir trees , etc.] Ordered his servants to cut them down from Lebanon, and sent them to him in floats, which he received: [according to] all his desire ; he had as many as he requested, and what he wanted.

Ver. 11 . And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat [for] food to his household , etc.] This measure was the Hebrew measure “cor”, or “corus”, and, according to Bishop Cumberland f80 , its contents were 17,477 solid inches; it was equal to ten ephahs, each of which held two gallons and an half, and the cor held seventy five wine gallons five pints, and somewhat more; according to some f81 , what it held was equal to six hundred forty eight Roman pounds; so that twenty thousand of them contained 12,960,000 pounds of wheat: and twenty measures of pure oil ; squeezed out of the olives without breaking them; the same kind of measure is here expressed as before, and the quantity answered

to 12,960 Roman pounds; another writer reckons a cor to contain 1080 Roman pounds; so that Hiram had every year 21,600 pounds of oil. In (2 Chronicles 2:10), it is twenty thousand baths of oil now not to take notice that the measures are different, a bath was but the tenth part of a cor, reference is had to different things; here the writer relates what was given to Hiram for his own family, there what was given to the workmen, where several other things are mentioned besides these: thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year : so long as the building lasted, and the workmen were employed; but Abarbinel thinks that he gave it to him as long as he lived, out of his great munificence and liberality.

Ver. 12 . And the Lord gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him , etc.] Which, among other things, appeared in his preparations for building the temple, and in his agreements with Hiram for timber and workmen for that purpose and by continuing and confirming friendship between himself and Hiram, who was so serviceable to him: and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon, and they two made a league together ; in order to continue and establish peace and friendship between them, which Solomon might lawfully do, the Tyrians being no part of the seven nations with whom alliances were forbidden. Ver. 13 . And King Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel , etc.] Not of money, but of men, as follows: and the levy was thirty thousand men ; for what purpose, and how they were employed, (1 Kings 5:14) shows.

Ver. 14 . And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month by courses , etc.] In their turns; these are the servants of his he proposed to be with Hiram's servants, assisting in cutting down the trees, and squaring the timber in Lebanon, (1 Kings 5:6); a month they were in Lebanon, [and] two months at home ; that they might not be overworked; for they wrought but four months in the year in the hard service in Lebanon, the rest of their time was spent in managing their domestic affairs; these were Israelites: and Adoniram [was] over the levy : the same that was over the tribute or the collectors of the tax, (1 Kings 4:6); and, according to the Targum, these were such persons.

Ver. 15 . And Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens , etc.] Seventy thousand to carry the stones from the mountains out of which they were dug, and which were near Jerusalem, to the city; these were strangers in Israel, as were those that follow: and fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains : eighty thousand that dug the stones

out of the quarries, and squared them; these, with the others, made 150,000, (see 2 Chronicles 2:17); according to Jacob Leon f83 , the number of workmen at the temple for seven years was 163,600, and some make them more.

Ver. 16 . Besides the chief of Solomon's officers which [were] over the work , etc.] Over the whole work, preparatory for the building of the temple; though it seems chiefly to have respect to that of hewing the stones, and bringing them to the city: three thousand and three hundred which ruled over the people that wrought in the work ; to keep them to their work, and to see that they performed it well: in (2 Chronicles 2:18); they are said to be 3600, which is three hundred more than here; those three hundred are the chief officers mentioned in the former part of this verse, which were over the whole work, and even over the 3600 overseers, and with them made up the sum of 3600; so Jacob Leon observes there were 3300 master workmen, and three hundred commanders over them all.

Ver. 17 . And the king commanded, and they brought great stones , etc.] Not in quality, but in quantity, large stones, fit to lay in the foundation; strong, and durable against all the injuries of time, as Josephus says f85 : costly stones ; not what are commonly called precious stones, as gems, pearls, etc. but stones of value, as marble, porphyry, etc. [and] hewed stones ; not rough as they were taken out of the quarry, but hewed, and made smooth: to lay the foundation of the house ; which, though out of sight, was to be laid with goodly stones for the magnificence of the building; so the church of Christ, its foundation is said to be laid even with sapphires and other precious stones, (see Isaiah 54:11 Revelation 21:19).

Ver. 18 . And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders did hew [them] , etc.] The stones; for it seems Solomon had not only hewers of wood, but of stone, from Hiram: and the stonesquarers ; or rather the Giblites, the men of Gebal, which were under the jurisdiction of Tyre, and were skilful in this sort of work, as some of them were in others, (see Ezekiel 27:9); so they prepared timber and stones to build the house ; both Solomon's and Hiram's builders, and the large number of workmen, both Israelites and strangers; which latter were an emblem of the Gentiles concerned in the building of the spiritual temple, the church of Christ, (Zechariah 6:15); and whereas the number of strangers that wrought for the building was far greater than that of the Israelites, it may denote the greater number of Gentiles in the Gospel church state mentioned besides these: thus gave

Solomon to Hiram year by year: so long as the building lasted, and the workmen were employed; but Abarbinel thinks that he gave it to him as long as he lived, out of his great munificence and liberality.

CHAPTER - INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 6

This chapter gives an account of the building of the temple, for which preparations were before made and begins with the time of its building, (1 Kings 6:1); gives the dimensions of it and the porch before it, (Kings 6:2,3); observes the windows in it and chambers about it, (Kings 6:4-10); and while it was building, Solomon had a word from the Lord relative to it, (1 Kings 6:11-14); and then the account goes on concerning the walls of the house, and the flooring of it, (1 Kings 6:15-18); and the oracle in it, and the cherubim in that, (1 Kings 6:19-30); and the doors into it, and the carved work of them, (1 Kings 6:31-36); and the chapter is concluded with observing the time when it was begun and finished (1 Kings 6:37,38).

Ver. 1 . And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt , etc.] The Tyrian writers make it five hundred sixty years from hence; but this no doubt is tightest, which Junius reckons thus; forty years Israel were in the wilderness, seventeen under Joshua, two hundred ninety nine under the judges, eighty under Eli, Samuel, and Saul, forty under David, add to which the four years of Solomon, and they make four hundred eighty f87 ; they are somewhat differently reckoned by others from the coming out of Egypt to Joshua forty years, from thence to the first servitude under Cushan twenty five, from thence to the death of Abimelech two hundred fifty six, under Thola twenty three, from thence to the Ammonitish servitude four, under that eighteen, under the judges, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon, thirty one, Samuel and Saul forty, David forty, and Solomon three, in all four hundred eighty; in the, fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel ; when he was clear of all disturbers of his government, and had got all things ready for the building of the temple, and had gathered together gold and silver enough of his own to defray the expenses; for, as for what David gave him, he put that into the treasury of the Lord's house, (see 1 Kings 7:51); in the month Zif, which [is] the second month ; and so must be Jiar, for Abib or Nisan was the first, and Jiar was the second, which answered to part of our April and part of May; called Zif either from the splendour of the sun, being now higher, and so the greater; or from the trees and flowers of the field being in all their glory; and so the Targum here calls it, the

month of splendour of flowers: and it was on the second day of it, that he began to build the house of the Lord : and a very fit and proper season of the year it was to begin it in, (see 2 Chronicles 3:2).

Ver. 2 . And the house which King Solomon built for the Lord , etc.] For his worship, honour, and glory: the length thereof [was] threescore cubits ; sixty cubits from east to west, including the holy place and the most holy place; the holy place was forty cubits, and the most holy place twenty; the same measure, as to length, Eupolemus, an Heathen writer f89 , gives of the temple, but is mistaken in the other measures: and the breadth thereof twenty [cubits] ; from north to south: and the height thereof thirty cubits ; this must be understood of the holy place, for the oracle or most holy place was but twenty cubits high, (Kings 6:20); though the holy place, with the chambers that were over it, which were ninety cubits, three stories high, was in all an hundred twenty cubits, (2 Chronicles 3:4); some restrain it to the porch only, which stood at the end, like one of our high steeples, as they think.

Ver. 3 . And the porch before the temple of the house , etc.] Which stood at the east end of it: twenty cubits [was] the length thereof, according to the breadth of the house ; which was from north to south, and of the same dimension, so that they exactly answered each other: [and] ten cubits [was] the breadth thereof before the house ; which being added to it, make the whole of the building, most holy place, holy place, and porch, seventy cubits; the height of the porch is not here given, but in (2 Chronicles 3:4); where it is said to be an hundred twenty cubits high, equal to the height of the house, with the chambers over it; but there the breadth of the porch is not given, as it is here; by these dimensions we may observe the difference between the tabernacle and the temple; the temple was twice as long, and as broad, and thrice as high as that, (see Exodus 26:8,16). This fabric was an emblem of the church of God, sometimes called an holy temple, and the temple of the living God, (2 Corinthians 6:16 Ephesians 2:21).

Ver. 4 . And for the house he made windows of narrow lights .] Or “open, shut” f90 , which could be both, having shutters to them, to open or shut at pleasure; windows which they could open, and look through at them, or shut when they pleased; the Targum is, “open within, and shut without;” or, as others understand it, they were wide within, and narrow without; by being narrow without, the house was preserved from bad weather, as well as could not so easily be looked into by those without; and

by being broader within, the light that was let in spread itself within the house; which some interpret only of the holy place, the most holy place having, as they suppose, no windows in it, which yet is not certain: now these windows may denote the word and ordinances of the church of God, whereby light is communicated to men; which in the present state is but narrow or small, in comparison of the new Jerusalem church state, and the ultimate glory; and especially so it was under the legal dispensation, which was very obscure; (see Song of Solomon 2:9) (Isaiah 55:8).

Ver. 5 . And against the wall of the house he built chambers round about , etc.] Or near it, as Jarchi interprets it, for the beams of them were not fastened in in it, (1 Kings 6:6); or rather “upon” it f91 ; and when they are said to be round about the house, it must be understood of the two sides, north and south, and of the west end only, for at the east end, where the porch was, there were none: [against] the walls of the house round about, [both] of the temple and of the oracle ; that is, both of the holy and the most holy place: and he made chambers round about ; the said buildings; which is repeated that it might be observed; how many chambers there were, is not said; Josephus says there were thirty of them, and over them others of the same measure and number, and over them others also; so that there were three stories of them, and in all ninety; and which is countenanced by what follows in (1 Kings 6:6), and agrees with (Ezekiel 41:6); the Jewish doctors say f93 , there were thirty eight of them, fifteen on the north, fifteen on the south, and eight on the west; they that were to the north and south were five upon five, and five over them; and they that were to the west were three upon three, and two over them; upper rooms or chambers were rare in Heathen temples f94 : these chambers were for the priests, where they lodged and laid up their garments, and ate their holy things; and were emblems of congregated churches, where the true members thereof, who are priests to God, have communion with him, and partake of divine things.

Ver. 6 . And the nethermost chamber [was] five cubits broad , etc.] The nethermost row of them, which were upon the first floor: and the middle [was] six cubits broad, and the third [was] seven cubits broad ; so that the middlemost was a cubit larger than the lowest, and the highest a cubit larger than that: the reason of which was, for without [in the wall] of the house he made narrowed rests round about ; or rebatements; the thickness of the wall, as it was raised, became narrower at the height of every five cubits; thus the wall being supposed to be six cubits broad, as in (Ezekiel

41:5); when it came to be five cubits high, it was narrowed a cubit, which left a projection, rebatement, or bench for the beams of the first chambers to be laid upon, which made the second row of chambers broader by a cubit; and the same being observed in the next story, made the highest a cubit broader than the middlemost: and this was done, that [the beams] should not be fastened in the walls of the house ; or be inserted into them, which could not be done without making holes in it; and these holes could not be made without an iron instrument, and which was not to be used, as the next words show; whereas by the above method the beams of the chambers could be laid upon the buttresses, benches, or rebatements left, without the use of any: the gradual enlargement of these chambers, as they rose higher, may denote the enlargement of the church of God, both as to numbers, gifts, and grace, the nearer it comes to the heavenly state, as in the spiritual and personal reign of Christ.

Ver. 7 . And the house, when it was in building , etc.] And all the while it was building: was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither ; being hewn or squared by the builders and stonesquarers of Solomon and Hiram, (Kings 5:18); wherefore the builders had nothing more to do than to lay them in their proper places in the building; it was built with these stones quite up to the ceiling, as Josephus says f95 ; and these so admirably polished, and so artificially joined together, that not the least sign of an axe, or of any working tool, could be discerned in them: so that there was neither hammer, nor axe, [nor] any tool of iron, heard in the house while it was in building ; the first of these observations shows, that none are to be laid in the spiritual building of the church, but such as are first hewed and squared by the Spirit, grace, and word of God: or who have an experience of the grace of God, are sound in the faith, and of becoming lives and good conduct; and the other denotes, that such as are therein, whether ministers or members, should do all they do for the edification of the church in a quiet and peaceable manner, without clamour, contention, fights, and tumults.

Ver. 8 . The door of the middle chamber [was] in the right side of the house , etc.] The south side of it: and they went up with winding stairs into the middle [chamber] ; which were outside the chambers, and which winded about for the sake of taking up less room, and which led up to the door of the middle chamber, on the south of which they went into it; according to the Vulgate Latin and Tigurine versions, they went up in the forth of a cockle, or the shell of a snail; in like manner as was the ascent of

the temple of Pan at Alexandria, as Strabo relates: and out of the middle into the third ; the third chamber, and by winding stairs up to that; and the like might be on the north side, though not expressed, and on the west: the Jews say f97 , that in the second temple, these winding stairs went from the northeast to the northwest, whereby they went up to the roof of the chambers, and so to the south and west; with this compare (Ezekiel 41:7); and which may represent the windings and turnings of God's people in this present state, their many afflictions and tribulations, through which they pass from one state to another.

Ver. 9 . So he built the house, and finished it , etc.] The body of it, the walls of the holy and most holy place, with the chambers on the sides of them, and the porch at the end that led into them: and covered the house with beams and boards of cedar ; with hollow boards, as the Targum, which formed an arch ceiling to it, and made it look very grand and beautiful; and then over them were laid beams and planks of cedar, not properly as a flat roof to it, but rather as a flooring for other buildings; for upon this, as in (1 Kings 6:10), there were chambers built.

Ver. 10 . And [then] he built chambers against all the house five cubits high , etc.] Which some understand of the same chambers in (1 Kings 6:5,6); here made mention of again for the sake of giving the height of them, not before given; but they were built against, or upon the wall of the house, these against, or rather upon the whole house itself; and are the chambers referred to, (see Gill on “ 1 Kings 6:2”); which consisting of three stories of ninety cubits, raised the whole house to an equal height with the porch, (2 Chronicles 3:4); as is there intended f98 ; these are the upper chambers in (2 Chronicles 3:9); and they rested on the house [with] timber of cedar; or on the timber of cedar, the beams of cedar, with which the house was covered, as in (1 Kings 6:9); on these the chambers rested, being built upon them; and in one of these chambers the disciples might be after Christ's ascension, (Acts 1:13).

Ver. 11 . And the word of the Lord came to Solomon , etc.] The word of prophecy, as the Targum, foretelling what would be the case of this building, according to the obedience or disobedience of him and the people of Israel; which was brought to him either by an impulse of the Spirit of God upon him; or by the hand of a prophet, as Kimchi thinks; and some of the Jewish writers f99 , as he particularly, name Ahijah the Shilonite as the prophet that was sent with this message to him: saying , as

follows.

Ver. 12 . [Concerning] this house which thou art in building , etc.] Or with respect to that, these things are to be said as from the Lord: if thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments to walk in them ; even all the laws of God, moral, ceremonial, and judicial; and this respects not only Solomon personally, but his successors, and even all the people of Israel: then will I perform my covenant with thee, which I spake unto David thy father ; by Nathan the prophet; not only that he should build an house for God, which should be a settled dwelling place, but that his own house and kingdom should be established for a long time to come, and his posterity should enjoy the presence of God in this house, provided regard was had to the precepts and ordinances of the Lord, (2 Samuel 7:12-16). Ver. 13 . And I will dwell among the children of Israel , etc.] In this house now building, and which was in the middle of the land, and where he would meet with them, and accept their sacrifices, not only of slain beasts, but of prayer and praise: and will not forsake my people Israel ; and leave them to the mercy of their enemies, and to be carried captive by them, but protect and defend them.

Ver. 14 . So Solomon built the house, and finished it .] He went on with it until he had completed it, animated and encouraged by the promise of the divine Presence in it, provided a proper regard was had to the will and ways of God. Abarbinel thinks the above message was sent him in the midst of his work, to strengthen and caution him from a dependence on the continuance of the fabric, because of the strength of it; since its perpetuity depended on his, his successors', and the people's conduct and behaviour; wherefore conscious to himself of his own integrity, and hoping well of posterity, he was not discouraged, but proceeded in his undertaking until he had brought it to perfection.

Ver. 15 . And he built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar , etc.] For as yet he had only built the stone walls of it without, but now he wainscotted it with cedar boards: and not only them, but both the floor of the house, and the walls of the ceiling ; or from "the floor of the house unto the walls of the ceiling"; that is, from the floor, including that, to the walls on each side, reaching up to the ceiling, he covered [them] on the inside with wood : of one sort or another, cedar or fir, or both: particularly he covered the floor of the house with planks of fir : which Hiram sent him, (1 Kings 5:8,10); which is differently interpreted; by Josephus cypress; by

others, as the Tigurine version, pine tree wood; it is very probable it was of the cedar kind, and not the floor only, but the ceiling also, (Chronicles 3:5).

Ver. 16 . And he built twenty cubits on the sides of the house , etc.] At the end or extremity of it, as the Targum; that is, he built the most holy place, which was twenty two cubits long, at the end of the holy place, which he wainscotted as the other: both the floor and the walls with boards of cedar ; or from the floor, including that, to the walls on each side, from wall to wall, and taking in them, they were all lined with cedar wood: he even built [them] for it within, [even] for the oracle, [even] for the most holy [place] ; which explains what building is spoken of, and that the inside of that was covered with cedar from bottom to top.

Ver. 17 . And the house, that [is], the temple before it , etc.] The holy place, which was before the of holies: was forty cubits [long] ; and which, with the most holy place, being twenty cubits, as in the preceding verse, made the length of the whole house sixty cubits, as in (1 Kings 6:2).

Ver. 18 . And the cedar of the house within , etc.] With which the inside of the place was lined: [was] carved with knops ; of an oval form; so the Targum says, they had the appearance of eggs; and Ben Gersom likewise, that they were in the form of eggs: and open flowers ; not in the figure of buds, but flowers blown, and open, as lilies and others; so the Targum: all [was] cedar ; the wainscoting of the house, the sides of it at least, if not the floor, and the carved work of it; and this was done, that the gold might be laid upon it, which could not be done on stone as on wood: and all was so covered, that there was no stone seen ; of which the outward walls were built: all this denotes the inward beauty of the church, and the curious workmanship of the Spirit of God in the hearts of his people, whereby they become all glorious within, adorned with the graces of the blessed Spirit, their stony hearts being kept out of sight, yea, taken away.

Ver. 19 . And the oracle he prepared in the house within , etc.] In the innermost part of the house he fitted up the oracle, or speaking place, from whence the Lord spake and gave answer, to receive what was to be put into it: particularly to set there the ark of the covenant of the Lord ; even the very same that Moses made, (Exodus 37:1-5), for which David had pitched a tent in Zion, (1 Chronicles 15:1), and where it now was; for Solomon made no new ark.

Ver. 20 . And the oracle in the forepart , etc.] Which stood in the forepart of the temple, before a man's face as he entered into it, and went on; or the forepart of the holy of holies, next to the holy place, was of the dimensions as follows, when the back part of it might be higher at least, and be equal to the holy place, even thirty feet; the forepart being lower, and left open to let in the light of the candlesticks, and the smoke of the incense, out of the holy place: this [was] twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof : and was a perfect square, and as the most holy place may be an emblem of the church triumphant, it may denote the perfection of its heavenly state; so the new Jerusalem is a foursquare, (Revelation 21:16); and he overlaid it with pure gold ; make it rich, glorious, and magnificent, and may denote the glory of the heavenly state, (Revelation 21:21); and so Florus f100 , the Roman historian, calls it the golden heaven, as it were, into which Pompey went, and saw the great secret of the Jewish nation, the ark: and [so] covered the altar [which was of] cedar ; the altar of incense, which is here mentioned, because it was near the most holy place, (Kings 6:22); this altar by Moses was made of shittim wood, but Solomon's was of cedar it seems; unless, as the words will bear to be rendered, "he covered the altar with cedar" f101 ; though made of shittim wood, it had a covering of cedar over it; or if of stone, such a covering was on it, that it might better receive the gold which was afterwards put upon it.

Ver. 21 . So Solomon overlaid the house within with pure gold , etc.] The inside of the holy of holies with fine gold, which gold amounted to six hundred talents, (2 Chronicles 3:8); and these to 7,332,000 ducats of gold, or 3,045,000 pounds sterling; and he made a partition by the chains of gold before the oracle ; between the holy and the most holy, and were instead of a vail in the tabernacle of Moses between them; here was also a vail beside the partition made by chains of gold across the oracle; for the partition was a wall of the thickness of a cubit, as Maimonides says; and in (2 Chronicles 3:14) express mention is made of a vail of blue, etc. and in imitation of this had the Heathens their deities within vails f103 : and he overlaid it with gold ; the partition wall.

Ver. 22 . And the whole house he overlaid with gold , etc.] Both the holy place, and the most holy place: until he had finished all the house ; in this splendid and glorious manner: also the whole altar that [was] by the oracle ; the altar of incense, which stood just before the entrance into the

oracle, or most holy place: he overlaid with gold ; he overlaid it all over with gold; hence it is called the golden altar, and was an emblem of the excellent and effectual mediation and intercession of Christ, (Revelation 8:3,4). Agreeably to this account Eupolemus, an Heathen writer testifies, that the whole house, from the floor to the tool, was covered with gold, as well as with cedar and cypress wood, that the stonework might not appear; and so the capitol at Rome, perhaps in imitation of this temple, its roofs and tiles were glided with gold f105 ; a magnificent temple, like this, was at Upsal in Switzerland, as Olaus Magnus relates f106 .

Ver. 23 . And within the oracle he made two cherubim [of] olive tree , etc.] Or of the oil tree, as in (Isaiah 41:19); (see Nehemiah 8:15); for there are other trees besides olives, out of which oil is pressed, as pine trees, cypress trees, etc. and which some think are here meant; though the Targum interprets it of the olive tree: these cherubim are different from those made by Moses, and were besides them; these were larger than they; these were made of olive wood, they of gold; these stood on the floor of the house, they at the two ends of the mercy seat, and were made out of it, and were with it in this holy place in Solomon's temple: these two cherubim may be emblems of the angels in their greatness and glory, who are always in the presence of God, behold his face, and wait to do his will; or it may be rather of the two witnesses, said to be the two olive trees standing before the God of the whole earth, (Revelation 11:3,4); who have boldness to enter into the holiest of all, and have sight and knowledge of the mysteries of the ark and mercy seat; have their commission from heaven, and speak according to the oracles of God; these are said to be of image work, (2 Chronicles 3:10); that is, of various forms, as the thee of a man, a lion, an ox, and eagle, (Ezekiel 1:10). Dr. Lightfoot thinks they resembled the two Testaments, which in their beginning and end reach the two sides of the world, the creation and the last judgment, and in the middle do sweetly join the one to the other: [each] ten cubits high ; half as high as the most holy place; emblems either of the high angels, those thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, or of men of uncommon size as to their gifts and grace.

Ver. 24 . And five cubits [was] the one wing of the cherub , etc.] When stretched out on one side: and five cubits the other wing of the cherub ; on the other side him: from the uttermost part of the one wing, to the uttermost part of the other wing, [were] ten cubits ; half the breadth of the house.

Ver. 25 . And the other cherub [was] ten cubits , etc.] That is, its wings stretched out measured so many cubits, as did those of the other: both the cherubim [were] of one measure, and of one size ; of the same height and stature, of the same breadth of their wings, and of the same bulk of their bodies; they were of “image work”; (2 Chronicles 3:10); very probably in the form of men: and this uniformity may denote the perfect agreement of angels; or else the consent of the true faithful witnesses of Christ in all ages, who have all agreed in the person, office, and grace of Christ, as represented by the mercy seat and ark, which these cherubim covered with their wings.

Ver. 26 . The height of the one cherub [was] ten cubits, and so [was it] of the other cherub .] Which is repeated from (1 Kings 6:23); that it might be observed, being of an extraordinary size.

Ver. 27 . And he set the cherubim within the inner house , etc.] The holy of holies: and they stretched forth the wings of the cherubims ; the carvers that framed them, they wrought them in that form; or impersonally, the wings of the cherubim were stretched out; this was the position of them, they overshadowed and covered the mercy seat and ark, and even the other two cherubim that were at the ends of the mercy seat: so that the wing of the one touched the one wall ; the southern wall: and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall ; the northern wall; they reached from wall to wall, even the whole breadth of the house, which was twenty cubits, as their wings thus spread were, (1 Kings 6:24,25 2 Chronicles 3:11); and their wings touched one another in the midst of the house ; which was ten cubits, and that was the spread of the wings of each of them; so that the wing of the right side of the one, stretched out, touched the wing of the left side of the other fit the same position; in (2 Chronicles 3:13); their faces are said to be “inward”, or “toward the house”; either toward the holy place, and so faced those that came into that and saw them; or towards the inner part of the holy of holies, their backs being to the holy place, or their faces were inward, and looked obliquely to each other.

Ver. 28 . And he overlaid the cherubim with gold .] Which may denote the purity and excellency of angels; or the precious gifts and graces of the Spirit, with which the witnesses of Christ are adorned.

Ver. 29 . And he carved all the walls of the house about with carved figures of cherubim, and palm trees, and open flowers , etc.] That is, of palm trees, those in full blow: if the cherubim are an emblem of angels, the palm trees fitly enough represent just and upright men, who both appear in the church of God below, and in heaven above; in both which are to be seen the open and full-blown flowers of divine grace, especially in the latter state: within and without ; on the walls of the most holy place, both within and without; and so upon the walls of the holy place, in each of which were these sculptures, which were very ornamental, and were emblematical; (see Ezekiel 41:17-20).

Ver. 30 . And the floor of the house he overlaid with gold within and without .] Both the floor of the holy place, and of the holy of holies; so the street of the new Jerusalem is said to be pure gold, (Revelation 21:21); this expresses the purity and magnificence of it, particularly the holy conversation of them that dwell in the church, in heaven, signified hereby.

Ver. 31 . And for the entering of the oracle he made doors [of] olive tree , etc.] The door of the holy of holies was a two leaved or folding door, made of olive wood; typical of Christ, the door into the church above and below, the way to heaven and eternal life, the true olive tree: the lintel [and] side posts [were] a fifth part [of the wall] ; four cubits, twenty cubits being the breadth of the oracle; or the lintel was four cubits, twenty being the height of it also, (1 Kings 6:20).

Ver. 32 . The two doors also [were of] olive tree , etc.] The two leaves of the door, as before observed, repeated for the sake of the ornament of them, as follows: and he carved upon them carvings of cherubims, and palm trees, and open flowers ; as upon the walls, (1 Kings 6:29); and overlaid [them] with gold ; the two doors: and spread gold upon the cherubims, and upon the palm trees ; thin plates of gold.

Ver. 33 . So also made he for the door of the temple , etc.] The holy place: posts [of] olive tree, a fourth part [of the wall] ; which was five cubits, its breadth being twenty, (1 Kings 6:20); this door was a cubit wider than that into the most holy place, (1 Kings 6:31), more entering into the one than into the other; as more go into the church on earth than into the heavenly glory.

Ver. 34 . And the two doors [were of] fir tree , etc.] the posts were of

olive, but the doors of fir, and they were both folding doors, as appears by what follows: the two leaves of the one door [were] folding, and the two leaves of the other door [were] folding ; which, taking up less room, made the passage wider, (see Ezekiel 41:24).

Ver. 35 . And he carved [thereon] cherubims, and palm trees, and open flowers , etc.] As upon the doors of the most holy place, (1 Kings 6:32); (see Ezekiel 41:25); and covered [them] with gold, fitted upon the carved work ; plates of gold were fitted, as to the dimensions of them, to the cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers.

Ver. 36 . And he built the inner court , etc.] The court of the priests, (Chronicles 4:9); so called to distinguish it from the outer court, where the people assembled: this was built with three rows of hewed stone, and a row of cedar beams ; the rows of stones were one upon another, topped with a row of cedar beams; or rather the cedar was a lining to the stones; and the whole is supposed to be about three cubits high, and was so low, that the people in the outward court might see priests ministering for them, and could converse with them; under the second temple, as Maimonides says, the court of the priests was higher than that of the court of Israel two cubits and an half, called the great court, for which doors were made, and those overlaid with brass, (2 Chronicles 4:9).

Ver. 37 . In the fourth year was the foundation of the house of the Lord laid , etc.] The fourth year of Solomon's reign: in the month Zif ; (see Gill on " 1 Kings 6:1").

Ver. 38 . In the eleventh year , etc.] That is, of the reign of Solomon: in the month Bul, [which is] the eighth month ; from the month Abib or Nisan; this month answers to part of our October, and part of November; it is the same month sometimes called Marchesvan; it had the name of Bul, because of the rains which usually fell in this month, as Kimchi thinks, like a flood; and Noah's flood is called Mabbul, from the same root f109 , and when all the fruits were withered, and the leaves were fallen from the trees; or, as Jarchi supposes, because the grass was consumed in the field, and they were obliged to mix provender for cattle, deriving the word from another root f110 : in this month was the house finished throughout all the parts thereof ; the porch, the holy place, and holy of holies, with all the chambers and courts belonging to it: and according to all the fashion of it ; which David had given to Solomon, to frame it by: so he was seven years

in building it ; and six months, which are not mentioned, only the round number is given, as appears by comparing it with (1 Kings 6:1).

CHAPTER - INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 7

CHAPTER - INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 8

This chapter gives an account of the introduction of the ark into the temple, (1 Kings 8:1-9) of the glory of the Lord filling it, (1 Kings 8:10,11) of a speech Solomon made to the people concerning the building of the temple, and how he came to be engaged in it, (1 Kings 8:12-21), of a prayer of his he put up on this occasion, requesting, that what supplications soever were made at any time, or on any account, by Israelites or strangers, might be accepted by the Lord, (1 Kings 8:22-53), and of his blessing the people of Israel at the close of it, with some useful exhortations, (1 Kings 8:54-61), and of the great number of sacrifices offered up by him, and the feast he made for the people, upon which he dismissed them, (1 Kings 8:62-66).

Ver. 1 . Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel , etc.] The judges in the several cities, or senators of the great sanhedrim, as others; though it is a question whether as yet there was such a court: and all the heads of the tribes ; the princes of the twelve tribes: the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel ; the principal men of the ancient families in every tribe: unto King Solomon in Jerusalem ; these he summoned together to himself there where the temple was built: that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, which is Zion ; whither David brought it, when he had taken that fort, so called, and dwelt in it; and from this mountain Solomon proposed to bring it up to the temple, on a higher mountain, Moriah, not far from one another.

Ver. 2 . And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto King Solomon at the feast , etc.] Not of tabernacles, as the Targum on (Chronicles 5:3) and so Jarchi; though that was in the same month next mentioned, and began on the fifteenth of it, and held seven days; wherefore this must be the feast of the dedication of the temple, and which was kept before that; since both lasted fourteen days, and the people were dismissed on the twenty third of the month; now not only the above principal persons convened, but a vast number of the common people came to see

the solemnity of removing the ark, and of dedicating the temple, and to attend the feast of it, and the more, since in a few days was the time for all the males in Israel to appear there: in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month ; it was, as the Targum says, originally the first month; but upon the children of Israel coming out of Egypt in Ab or Nisan, that became the first month, and this was the seventh from that; and is the same with Tisri, which answers to part of September, and part of October, here called Ethanim; which some render the month of the ancients, others of strong ones; either because of the many feasts that were in it, as some say; or because it was the time of ingathering all the increase and fruits of the earth, which strengthen and support man's life; or rather of "never failing", i.e. waters, showers falling in this month, and the rivers full of water f136 ; so September is "septimus imber", according to Isidore f137 , and the three following months are alike derived; this, by the Egyptians, was called Theuth, and was with them the first month in the year f138 ; so Porphyry says f139 , with the Egyptians the beginning of the year was not Aquarius, as with the Romans, but Cancer; and so the month of September was the first with the Ethiopians f140 , and with most people f141 ; though with the Chinese about the middle of Aquarius f142 . Now, though the temple was finished in the eighth month, (1 Kings 6:38), it was not dedicated until the seventh in the following year; it required time to finish the utensils and vessels, and put them in their proper place, and for the drying of the walls, etc.

Ver. 3 . And all the elders of Israel came , etc.] To Zion, the city of David: and the priests took up the ark ; from thence; in (2 Chronicles 5:4) it is said the Levites did it, whose business it was, (Deuteronomy 31:25), and so the priests might be called; for every priest was a Levite, though every Levite was not a priest, and the priests did at all times bear the ark; (see Joshua 3:15 6:4 2 Samuel 15:29).

Ver. 4 . And they brought up the ark of the Lord , etc.] From the city of David to the temple: and the tabernacle of the congregation ; not the tent David made for the ark, though that might be brought also, but the tabernacle of Moses, which had been many years at Gibeon; but now removed to Zion, and from thence to the temple, where it was laid up, as having been a sacred thing; that it might not be put to common or superstitious uses, and to prevent the being of more places than one for worship: and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle ; as the candlestick, shewbread table, incense altar, etc. even those did the priests

and the Levites bring up ; some brought one, and some another; the priests brought the ark, and the Levites the vessels.

Ver. 5 . And King Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled together , etc.] On this solemn occasion: were with him before the ark ; while it was in the court of the priests, before it was carried into the most holy place: sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude ; the phrase seems to be hyperbolical, and designed to denote a great number.

Ver. 6 . And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord unto his place , etc.] Destined for it, the like to which it had in the tabernacle: into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place ; that part of the house where the divine oracle was, the holy of holies; for though into it none but the high priest might enter, and he but once a year; yet in case of necessity, as for the repair of it, which the Jews gather from hence, other priests might enter, as was the case now; an high priest could not carry in the ark himself, and therefore it was necessary to employ others; and besides, as yet the divine Majesty had not taken up his residence in it: even under the wings of the cherubim ; the large ones which Solomon had made, (1 Kings 6:23) not those of Moses.

Ver. 7 . For the cherubim spread forth [their] two wings over the place of the ark , etc.] The most holy place where the ark stood, even from wall to wall: and the cherubim covered the ark, and the staves thereof above ; so that neither could be seen. Ver. 8 . And they drew out the staves , etc.] Not made them larger, as Ben Gersom, than those in the tabernacle of Moses, this place being larger than that; nor did they draw them wholly out, and lay them up in the sanctuary, there being no further use for them, the ark having now a fixed place, and not to be removed; which would have been contrary to (Exodus 25:15) but they drew them out some little way: that the ends of the staves were seen out in the holy place before the oracle ; not in that part of the temple commonly called the holy place, in distinction from the most holy, for that seems to be denied in the next clause; nor could they be seen there, since there was a wall and a vail between them; though some think they might be seen when the door was opened, and the vail turned aside; and these also pushing against the vail, might be seen prominent, like the breasts of a woman under a covering, as the Jews express it; but the sense is, that the ends of these were seen out of the ark from under the wings of the cherubim, being a little drawn, in that part

of the most holy place which is before the oracle or mercy seat: and they were not seen without ; neither quite out of the ark, nor without the most holy place, nor in the holy place; but were only seen by the high priest when he went in on the day of atonement, and served as a direction to him to go between them before the ark, and there perform his work f144 ; which, through the darkness of the place, and the ark being covered with the wings of the cherubim, he could not otherwise discern the exact place where it stood: and there they are unto this day : when the writer of this book lived, even in the same situation.

Ver. 9 . There was nothing in the ark, save the two tables of stone which Moses put there at Horeb , etc.] That is, there were no other writings; or, as Ben Gersom says, no other part of the law, but the decalogue otherwise he observes there were in it Aaron's rod and the pot of manna, according to (Hebrews 9:4) though the particle there may be rendered "at", or "with", or "by", (see Gill on " Hebrews 9:4") and so they might be not within it, but in some place on the sides of it, (see Deuteronomy 31:26), when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt ; about two months after.

Ver. 10 . And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place , etc.] The most holy place, having set up the ark of the Lord there, who were all sanctified that were there, and did not wait by course as at other times, (see 2 Chronicles 5:11), where in (2 Chronicles 5:12,13) it is said, that at this time, the Levites, who were singers of the families of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, arrayed in fine linen, with their musical instruments in their hands, stood at the east end of the altar of burnt offering, and one hundred and twenty priests, blowing their trumpets, praised the Lord together with one sound, declaring his goodness and his mercy, which endure for ever: and then it was that the cloud filled the house of the Lord ; the whole temple, both the holy of holies and the holy place, and the court of the priests; so that it was visible to all, and was a token of the divine presence of God, of his taking possession of his house, and of his taking up his residence in it.

Ver. 11 . So that the priests could not stand to minister, because of the cloud , etc.] Either through the darkness it first caused, or through the light that broke out of it, which was dazzling to them, or through the terror it struck their minds with; they could neither minister in the holy place, by offering incense there; and as for the most holy place, none but

the high priest could minister there, and that on one day only; nor in the court of the priests, at the altar of burnt offerings: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord ; a bright and glorious stream came forth from the cloud, and spread itself all over the house, and then took up its abode in the most holy place as in the tabernacle, (Exodus 40:34 Ezekiel 43:2,4,5).

Ver. 12 . And then spake Solomon , etc.] Perceiving by this symbol that the Lord was come into his house, to take up his dwelling in it, and seeing the priests and people in consternation at it, spake the following words to their comfort: the Lord said that he would dwell in the thick darkness ; and now was fulfilling his promise, and therefore to be considered not as a token of his displeasure, but of his gracious presence; this was done for the greater awe of the divine Majesty, and to denote the darkness of the former dispensation; reference may be had to (Leviticus 16:2) or rather this was now said by the Lord, that is, it appeared to be his resolution and determination to dwell in this manner; the Targum is, “the Lord is pleased to cause his Shechinah or divine Majesty to dwell in Jerusalem,” in the temple there. This was imitated by the Heathens; hence the Lacedemonians had a temple dedicated to Jupiter Scotitas, or the dark, as Pausanias relates; and the Indian Pagans to this day affect darkness in their temples, and are very careful that no light enter into them but by the door, which is commonly strait and low, and by little crevices in the windows f146 .

Ver. 13 . I have surely built thee an house to dwell in , etc.] Turning himself from the priests and people, he quieted with a few words, he addressed the Lord; having built an house for him, for his worship and glory, with this view, that he might dwell in it, he was now, by the above token, fully assured it would be an habitation for him: a settled place for thee to abide in for ever ; which is observed in distinction from the tabernacle of Moses, which was often removed from place to place, otherwise this did not continue for ever; though Solomon might hope it would, at least unto the times of the Messiah; and indeed such a building on this spot, for such use, did continue so long, excepting the interval of the seventy years’ captivity in Babylon.

Ver. 14 . And the king turned his face about , etc.] He was before the altar, (1 Kings 8:22), with his face to that first, and looking towards the holy and the most holy place, filled with the cloud and glory; and now he turned himself and stood with the altar behind him, and looking

to the court of the people: and blessed all the congregation of Israel ; either blessed the Lord before them, or prayed for blessings for them, or congratulated them upon the Lord's taking up his residence in the temple, which was so great an honour and favour to them: and all the congregation of Israel stood : ready to receive the king's blessing, and in honour of him, and reverence to the divine Being. The Jews say, none might sit in the court but the kings of the house of David.

Ver. 15 . And he said, blessed be the Lord God of Israel , etc.] All praise and glory, honour and blessing, be ascribed to the Lord; who had afresh shown himself to be Israel's covenant God, by taking up his residence among them in the temple he had filled with his glory: which spake with his mouth to David my father, and hath with his hand fulfilled it ; who graciously promised him he should have a son that should build an house for him, and which he had by his power and providence faithfully performed; or rather which spake concerning David, so Noldius f147 ; for God did not speak with his mouth to David, but to Nathan, of him: saying; as follows.

Ver. 16 . Since the day that I brought forth my people Israel out of Egypt , etc.] Which was now about four hundred and eighty eight years ago; (see 1 Kings 6:1,38 8:2). I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel to build an house, that my name might be therein ; he had chosen one in his mind from all eternity; but he had not made known this choice, nor the place he had chosen; he gave hints by Moses, that there was a place which he should choose, or declare he had chosen to put his name in, but did not express it, (Deuteronomy 12:5,11) but now it was a clear case that he had chosen Jerusalem, and that was the city he always had in view, (see 2 Chronicles 6:6), but I chose David to be over my people Israel ; to be their king, and to him he gave the first hint of the place where the temple was to be built, (<132201> Chronicles 22:1), and he chose no man, and his family with him, before him, to rule over Israel, and be concerned in such a work, (see Chronicles 6:5).

Ver. 17 . And it was in the heart of David my father , etc.] His mind was disposed to it, his heart was set upon it, he had taken up a resolution: to build an house for the name of the Lord God of Israel ; for his worship and service, for his honour and glory, (2 Samuel 7:3).

Ver. 18 . And the Lord said unto David my father , etc.] By Nathan the

prophet: whereas it was in thine heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart ; his design was good, and so far it was acceptable to the Lord, that he thought of such a thing, though it was not his pleasure that should do it, as follows.

Ver. 19 . Nevertheless, thou shall not build the house , etc.] Which is implied in the question in (2 Samuel 7:5) but thy son that shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house unto my name ; which is expressed in (2 Samuel 7:12-13). Ver. 20 . And the Lord hath performed his word that he spake , etc.] To David, concerning his son's building the temple: and I am risen up in the room of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised ; succeeded him in the kingdom: and have built an house for the name of the Lord God of Israel ; the temple he had now finished; and thus the promise to David was punctually fulfilled, that he should have a son that should succeed him in the throne, and build the house of the Lord.

Ver. 21 . And I have set there a place for the ark , etc.] The most holy place: wherein is the covenant of the Lord ; the two tables of stone, on which were the covenant of the Lord, as the Targum: which he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt ; as in (1 Kings 8:9).

Ver. 22 . And Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord , etc.] The altar of the burnt offering in the court of the priests, where he prayed the following prayer; and which altar was typical of Christ, who is always to be in sight in prayer, and through whom all sacrifices of prayer and praise become acceptable to God. In (2 Chronicles 6:13) he is said to stand upon a scaffold of brass, five cubits long, five broad, and three high, which stood in the midst of the court; it was a sort of a pulpit, round, as a laver, for which the word is sometimes used, and on which he kneeled: in the presence of all the congregation of Israel ; who stood in the great court before him, called the court of Israel: and spread forth his hands toward heaven ; and hence it appears, that though Solomon stood before the altar, he did not lay hold on it with his hands, as the Heathens did when they prayed; for they say f148 , that prayer alone does not appease the Deity, unless he that prays also lays hold on the altar with his hands; hence altars, at first, as we are told f149 , were called “ansae”; and lifting up or spreading the hands towards heaven was a proper gesture with the Greeks and Romans f150 .

Ver. 23 . And he said, Lord God of Israel , etc.] Their covenant God and Father, whereby he was distinguished from all the gods of the Gentiles: there is no god like thee; in heaven above or on earth beneath ; none among the angels in heaven, nor among kings and civil magistrates on earth, who both are sometimes called “Elohim” gods; but only in a figurative sense, and not to be compared with the one only true God, for the perfection of his nature, or the works of his hands: who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart ; performs his promises, by which he both declares his mercy or goodness and his faithfulness to such who walk before him, in his ways, and according to his word, in the sincerity and uprightness of their hearts.

Ver. 24 . Who hast kept with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him . etc.] Concerning a son, his successor, and the builder of the temple: thou, spakest also with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand , as it is this day; the temple being now finished by him, (see 1 Kings 8:15).

Ver. 25 . Therefore now, Lord God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him , etc.] That as he had fulfilled one part of his promise respecting himself, his immediate successor, so that he would fulfil the other respecting his more remote offspring: saying, there shall not fail thee a man in my sight, to sit on the throne of Israel ; one of David’s posterity to inherit his throne and kingdom, but with this proviso: so that thy children takes heed to their way ; in what way they walk, and how they walk in it: that they walk before me as thou hast walked before me ; meaning as David walked, (see <19D211> Psalm 132:11,12).

Ver. 26 . And now, O God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified , etc.] Truly made good, and punctually performed: which thou spakest unto thy servant David my father ; the same request in other words, repeated to show his ardent and vehement desire to have it fulfilled.

Ver. 27 . But will God indeed dwell on the earth ? etc.] Is it true? Can any credit be given to it? Who could ever have thought it, that so great and glorious a Being, who inhabits eternity, dwells in the highest heavens, should ever condescend to dwell on earth? Such was the amazing condescension of Christ, the Son of God, to tabernacle in human nature with men on earth, to which Solomon perhaps might have respect; his

temple being the figure of his body, in which the Godhead dwells, (John 2:19 Colossians 2:9 John 1:14) behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee ; not, only the visible heavens, but the third heaven, where the throne of God is, and is the habitation of angels and saints; though there God makes the most glorious displays of himself yet he is so immense and infinite, that he is not to be comprehended and circumscribed in any place whatever: how much less this house that I have builded ? Though temples built for idols contain them, and are large enough, yet Solomon had no notion, when he built his temple, though it was for the name of God, that he was restrained to it, but dwelt everywhere, filling heaven and earth with his presence.

Ver. 28 . Yet have thou respect to the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O Lord my God , etc.] Meaning himself, who, though a king acknowledged himself, and esteemed it an honour to be the servant of the Lord, and who was also an humble suppliant of his, and desired his prayers and supplications might be attended to: to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee this day ; the particulars of which follow.

Ver. 29 . That thine eyes may be open towards this house night and day , etc.] That is, to the people that pray in it, as they are to his righteous ones, (Psalm 33:14) even towards the place of which thou hast my name shall be there; there should be some displays of his presence, power, and providence, of goodness, grace, and mercy: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make towards this place ; not only to what he should make in it, but to what he should make in his own house, with his face directed towards this, as would be, and was the practice of good people in later times, yea, even when the temple lay in ruins; (see Daniel 6:10) figuring the respect gracious souls have to Christ by faith in their prayers, in whom the Godhead dwells bodily, (see Jon 2:4) and it is observable, according to a Jewish canon f151 , one at a distance, in another land, was not only to turn his face to the land of Israel, but direct his heart to Jerusalem, and the temple, and the holy of holies; and if in the land, to Jerusalem, etc. and if in Jerusalem, not only to the temple, and holy of holies, but if behind the mercy seat, he was to turn his face to it; which was a symbol of Christ, the propitiatory and throne of grace, to be looked unto by faith, (Romans 3:25 1 John 2:2 Hebrews 4:16).

Ver. 30 . And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of

thy people Israel, when they shall pray towards this place , etc.] Not only he desires his prayers might be heard, but those of the people of Israel, then, and at all times in succeeding ages, whenever they should look towards the temple, and to him that was typified by it; to whose blood, righteousness, sacrifice and mediation, the acceptance of prayers with God is to be ascribed: and hear thou in heaven thy dwellingplace ; for though he condescended to take up his residence in the temple, yet his more proper and more glorious dwelling was in heaven, and from whence, notwithstanding the distance of it, he could hear the prayers of his people, and does: and when thou hearest, forgive ; manifest and apply pardoning grace and mercy on account of sins confessed, and repented of; or remove calamities and distresses on account of sin, which sometimes is meant, and frequently in this prayer, by the forgiveness of sin.

Ver. 31 . If any man trespass against his neighbour , etc.] By being unfaithful in a trust committed to him, or the like: and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear ; he denying that ever anything was committed to his trust, and there being no witnesses of it, the judge obliges him to take an oath he never had any: and the oath come before thine altar in this house ; where it was taken, as in the presence of God, and as appealing to him: hence in corrupt times they came to swear by the altar, (Matthew 23:20) and so the Heathens used to take their oaths in the temples of their gods, and at their altars, as the instances of Callicrates and Hannibal show, and others Grotius refers to; yea, they also laid hold on the altar, at least touched it when they swore to give the greater sanction to the oath.

Ver. 32 . Then hear thou in heaven , etc.] When the injured person makes supplication to have justice done him: and do, and judge thy servants ; contending with one another, the one affirming, the other denying condemning the wicked, by bringing his way upon his head : inflicting upon him the punishment imprecated by him in his oath: and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness ; by making it appear that his cause is just.

Ver. 33 . When thy people Israel shall be smitten down before the enemy , etc.] Beaten and routed, many slain, and others carried captive; which had been their case, and might be again, and was, though now a time of peace: because they have sinned against thee ; which always was the reason of their being given up into the hands of their enemies: and

shall turn again to thee ; to thy worship, as the Targum, having fallen into idolatry, which was generally the case when they fell before their enemies: and confess thy name ; own him to be the true God, acknowledge his justice in their punishment, confess their sin, repent of it, and give him glory: and pray and make supplication unto thee in this house ; not the captives, unless it should be rendered, as it may, “toward this house” f155 ; but those that escaped, or their brethren that went not out to battle, who should pray for them here.

Ver. 34 . Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel , etc.] It being not personal, but public sins, which would be the cause of such a calamity: and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers ; as had been often their case in the time of the judges.

Ver. 35 . When heaven is shut up , etc.] As it may be said to be when the air is quite serene, and not a cloud in it: and there is no rain ; in its season, neither the former nor the latter, as it was in the times of Elijah: because they have sinned against thee ; want of rain was threatened in case of sin, and was always the effect of it, (Leviticus 26:19,20 Deuteronomy 28:23,24), if they pray towards this place ; in any part of the country where they were; for it sometimes rained on one city, and not on another, (Amos 4:7) and confess thy name ; own his power and his providence, and the justness of his dealings with them: and turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them ; their affliction being made useful, to bring them to a sense of their sin, and to repentance for it, and reformation from it; or, “when thou hearest” or “answerest them” f156 ; so the Targum, receives their prayer; thus the goodness of God leads to repentance.

Ver. 36 . Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel , etc.] By removing the judgment of drought upon them: that thou teach them the good way wherein they should walk ; the way of worship and duty prescribed by the Lord which was good in itself, and good for them, good things being enjoyed by them that walk therein; and this the Lord sometimes teaches by afflictions, as well as by his word; but whenever he does it, it is by his Spirit, and then afflictions are blessings, (<19A419> Psalm 104:19 2 Chronicles 6:27) where the same phrase is differently rendered: and give rain upon the land which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance ; as he did at the prayer of Elijah, (James 5:18).

Ver. 37 If there be in the land famine , etc.] Through want of rain, or any other cause, as there had been a three years' famine in the time of David, and it is supposed it might be again, though Canaan was a land flowing with milk and honey: if there be pestilence ; as there had been, for David's numbering the people: blasting ; or blights, occasioned by the east wind: mildew ; a kind of clammy dew, which falling on plants, corn, etc. corrupts and destroys them, (see Amos 4:9), locust , or if there be caterpillar ; creatures very pernicious to the fruits of the earth, and cause a scarcity of them, (see Joel 1:4), if their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities ; so that they cannot go out to gather the increase of the earth, or till their land: whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness there be ; whatever stroke from the hand of God, or what judgment or calamity soever befalls.

Ver. 38 . What prayer and supplication soever , etc.] On account of any of the above things, or any other: be [made] by any man, or by all the people Israel ; by a private man, for such an one might go to the temple and pray by himself; (see Luke 18:10,11) or by the public congregation: which shall know every man the plague of his own heart ; be sensible of his sin as the cause of his distress, and own it, though ever so privately committed, which none knows but God and his own heart; and which may be only an heart sin, not actually committed; as all sin is originally in the heart, and springs from it, that is the source of all wickedness; it may respect the corruption of nature, indwelling sin, which truly deserves this name, and which every good man is led to observe, confess, and bewail, (Psalm 51:4,5). In (2 Chronicles 6:29) it is, shall know his own sore and his own grief ; what particularly affects him, and gives him pain and sorrow, as every man best knows his own affliction and trouble, and so can best represent his own case to the Lord: and spread forth his hands towards this house ; pray with his face towards it, and his hands spread out, a prayer gesture, and what was now used by Solomon, (1 Kings 8:22).

Ver. 39 . Then hear thou in heaven thy dwellingplace , etc.] Which was more properly so than this Solomon had built, and the Lord had taken possession of: and forgive ; remove the calamity and distress, be it what it may: and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest : that his prayer is cordial and sincere, his confession and repentance genuine, and that he is truly sensible of his sin, and sorry for it, and is pure in his intentions and resolutions, through divine grace, to depart from it for the future: (for thou, [even] thou only knowest the hearts

of all the children of men;) he knows all men, the hearts of them all, what is in them, what comes out of them, and is according to them; omniscience belongs only to God; it is his prerogative to know the heart and search the reins, (see Jeremiah 17:9,10).

Ver. 40 . That they may fear thee , etc.] For his goodness sake in hearing their prayer, removing their affliction, and bestowing his blessings on them, particularly in forgiving their sins, (see <19D004> Psalm 130:4 Hosea 3:5) all the days that they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers ; not only for the present, while the mercy is fresh, but all the days of their lives; to which they were the more obliged by the good land they possessed as a divine gift, and which they held by the tenure of their obedience, (Isaiah 1:19).

Ver. 41 . Moreover, concerning a stranger that is not of thy people Israel , etc.] One of another country, not belonging to any of the tribes of Israel, yet having some knowledge of, and disposition to, the true worship of God: but cometh out of a far country for thy name's sake ; as the Ethiopian eunuch did, to pray to him, worship him, and offer such sacrifices as were allowed a Gentile to do, (Leviticus 22:18) led thereunto by the fame of him, as follows.

Ver. 42 . (For they shall hear of thy great name , etc.) Of his great name, Jehovah; of him as the eternal, immutable, and self-existent Being; of the perfections of his nature, as displayed in his mighty works: and of thy strong hand, and of thy stretched out arm) ; which had done formerly such mighty works in Egypt, at the Red sea, in the wilderness, in the land of Canaan, in the times of David, and still under the reign of Solomon, and even in future ages, besides the works of creation and providence in general: when he shall come and pray towards this house ; not being admitted into it, only into a court, which in later times was called the court of the Gentiles, (see Acts 21:19). Ver. 43 . Hear thou in heaven thy dwellingplace , etc.] The prayer of the stranger: and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for ; which were consistent with the will of God and his glory, and for the good of the stranger; this is more absolutely and unconditionally expressed than the requests for the Israelites; it is not desired that he would do by them according to their ways, and if they turned from their sins, or knew the plague of their hearts; the reason of which is supposed to be, because the Israelites knew the will of God, when the strangers did not; and therefore it is desired that, notwithstanding

their ignorance, and their non-compliance with the divine will, through that, they might be heard and answered: that all people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel ; might know him to be a God, hearing and answering prayer, forgiving sin, and bestowing favours, which might lead them to fear him and his goodness, as Israel did: and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by thy name ; that he dwelt in it, granted his presence, heard and received the supplications of men, answered their requests, and accepted of their sacrifices here. Solomon seems to have had knowledge of the calling of the Gentiles, and to desire it.

Ver. 44 . If thy people go out to battle against their enemy , etc.] In a foreign country, threatening to invade them, or having trespassed on their borders, or some way or other infringed on their liberties and privileges, and so given them just occasion to go to war with them: whithersoever thou shalt send them ; this case supposes their asking counsel of God, or having a direction and commission from him by a prophet, or some other way, to engage in war with the enemy: and shall pray unto the Lord toward the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house I have built for thy name : for, notwithstanding the justness of their cause, and having a warrant from God to go to war, yet they were to pray to him for success when at a distance, even in a foreign land, and about to engage the enemy; and this they were to do, turning their faces towards the city of Jerusalem, and the temple there; declaring thereby that their dependence was upon the Lord that dwelt there, and their expectation of victory was only from him. Ver. 45 . Then hear thou in heaven their prayer and their supplication , etc.] For success: and maintain their cause ; do them justice, and avenge their injuries, as the Targum; let it appear that their cause is right, by giving them victory.

Ver. 46 . If they sin against thee , etc.] The same persons when they were gone forth to battle, not observing the divine commands as they should: for there is no man that sinneth not ; such are the depravity of human nature, the treachery of the heart, and the temptations of Satan, of which Solomon had early notice, and was afterwards still more confirmed in the truth of, (Ecclesiastes 7:20) and thou be angry with them ; for their sins, and resent their conduct: so as to deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captive unto the land of the enemy, far or near ; as into Assyria or Babylon, whither they were carried.

Ver. 47 . Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives , etc.] Or, “return to their heart” fl57 ; remember their sins, the cause of their captivity, and reflect upon them: and repent of them, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives ; though and while they are in such a state: saying, we have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness ; which phrases include all their sins, with all the aggravated circumstances of them, and their sense of them, and contrition for them.

Ver. 48 . And so return unto thee, with all their heart, and with all their soul , etc.] In the most sincere and cordial manner, with great ingenuity and uprightness; the Targum is, “return unto thy worship;” relinquishing false worship they had given into, and serve the Lord in the best manner they could: in the land of their enemies, which led them away captive ; and so at a distance from that temple, and the service of it, which Ver. 49 . Then hear thou their prayers, and their supplication, in heaven thy dwellingplace , etc.] For their deliverance out of captivity: and maintain their cause; plead it, and do them justice, avenge their injuries, and deliver them.

Ver. 50 . And forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee , etc.] By returning them to their own land; by which it would appear that the Lord had forgiven their trespasses, as well as by what follows: and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them ; for it is in the power of God to work upon the affections of men, and dispose their minds to use his people well, and to pity them under their distresses, as the Chaldeans did the Jews in Babylon, (<19A646> Psalm 106:46).

Ver. 51 . For they be thy people, and thine inheritance , etc.] Whom the Lord had chosen above all people, to be a special people to him, and to be his portion and possession; (see Deuteronomy 7:6 32:9) which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron ; hard and cruel bondage in Egypt: (see Gill on “ Deuteronomy 4:20”).

Ver. 52 . That thine eyes may be open to the supplication of thy servant , etc.] That is, attentive to it, meaning himself and his present supplication; or any other he should hereafter put up in this place: and unto the supplication of thy people Israel, to hearken unto them in all that they call unto thee : at any time, and upon any account; so far as may be agreeable to

his will, make for his glory, and their good; (see Deuteronomy 4:7).

Ver. 53 . For thou didst separate them from among all people of the earth to be thine inheritance , etc.] By his choice of them in his own mind, by the redemption of them out of Egypt, by the peculiar laws he gave them, and by the special blessings he conferred upon them: as thou spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord our God ; it was he that spake this to Moses, and by him to the people, (Exodus 19:5,6) and it was he that did it, namely, separate them from all nations, to be his people and peculiar treasure: in this and the two preceding verses Solomon makes use of arguments taken from what the people of Israel were to the Lord, and he had done for them, to engage him to hearken to their supplications, and here ends his long prayer; in (2 Chronicles 6:1) some things are added at the close of it, and some omitted.

Ver. 54 . And it was so, that, when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the Lord , etc.] In which he was a type of Christ, praying and interceding for his people before the golden altar, (Revelation 8:3,4), he arose from before the altar of the Lord ; the altar of burnt offering, over against which he was: from kneeling on his knees ; upon the brasen scaffold; (see 2 Chronicles 6:13), in which posture he was during this long prayer: with his hands spread up to heaven ; which gesture he had used in his prayer, and now continued in blessing the people.

Ver. 55 . And he stood and blessed all the congregation of Israel with a loud voice , etc.] Turning himself the altar, and his face to the people, giving them his benediction, not only as the father of his people, but as preacher in Jerusalem, closing it with a word of exhortation to them: saying : as follows.

Ver. 56 . Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according, to all that he promised etc.] A land of rest, and rest in the land from all enemies; (see Deuteronomy 12:9,10), there hath not failed one word of all his good promises, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant : so Joshua observed a little before his death, (Joshua 23:14) to which Solomon seems to have respect; and who lived to see a greater accomplishment of the gracious promises of God, and his faithfulness therein, both in the times of his father David, and his own.

Ver. 57 . The Lord our God be with us as he was with our fathers , etc.] Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and those that came out of Egypt, and especially that entered into the land of Canaan under Joshua, and subdued it; as the Lord had been with them to guide and direct them, protect and defend them, succeed and prosper them, so Solomon desires he might be with them: nothing is more desirable than the presence of God; Solomon could not have prayed for a greater blessing for himself and his people; the Targum is, “let the Word of the Lord our God be for our help, as he was for the help of our fathers:” let him not leave us, nor forsake us : this was no doubt a prayer of faith, founded upon a divine promise, (Joshua 1:5).

Ver. 58 . That he may incline our hearts unto him , etc.] By his Spirit, to love, fear, and serve him; to attend to his worship, word, and ordinances: to walk in all his ways ; he has prescribed and directed to: and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, which he commanded our fathers ; all his laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial.

Ver. 59 . And let these my words, wherewith I have made supplication before the Lord , etc.] At this time: be nigh unto the Lord our God day and night ; be continually remembered and regarded by him, that so gracious answers might always be returned to those who supplicated in this place: that he maintain the cause of his servant ; of himself and his successors in the throne, that they may continue to possess it in peace, to the glory of God, and the good of the people: and the cause of his people Israel at all times : that their rights and privileges might be continued, and they supported in them; and both his cause and theirs be regarded: as the matter shall require ; as they should stand in need of assistance, direction, and protection.

Ver. 60 . That all the people of the earth may know that the Lord is God , etc.] By chastising the people of Israel when they sinned; by bearing and answering their prayers when they prayed unto him; by forgiving their sins, and delivering them out of their troubles; by maintaining their cause, and protecting them in the enjoyment of their blessings: and that there is “none else”; no God besides him; all being else fictitious deities, or nominal ones; he only is the one living and true God. Ver. 61 . Let your heart therefore be perfect with the Lord your God , etc.] Sincere in their love to him, united in their worship of him, and constant in their obedience to him: to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day : as they did that day, neither king nor people having as yet fallen into idolatry, but showing

by their then present appearance a zeal for God, his house, and worship.

Ver. 62 . And the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifice before the Lord .] For burnt offerings, which having been laid upon the altar, as soon as the king had done praying to God, and blessing the people, and exhorting them, fire came down from heaven, and consumed them; which showed the Lord's acceptance of the sacrifices, and was another confirmation, besides the cloud, of the Lord's well pleasedness with the temple, and of his taking possession of it to reside in it; upon which the people bowed and worshipped, and praised the Lord for his goodness and mercy, (2 Chronicles 7:1-3).

Ver. 63 . And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered unto the Lord , etc.] Part of which belonged to the offerer, and with those Solomon feasted the people all the days of the feast of the dedication, if not of tabernacles also; for the number was exceeding large, as follows: 22,000 oxen, and 120,000 sheep ; which, as suggested, might be the number for all the fourteen days; nor need it seem incredible, since, as Josephus says, at a passover celebrated in the times of Cestius the Roman governor, at the evening of the passover, in two hours time 256,500 lambs were slain; however, this was a very munificent sacrifice of Solomon's, in which he greatly exceeded the Heathens, whose highest number of sacrifices were hecatombs, or by hundreds, but his by thousands: so the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the Lord ; devoted it to divine and religious worship by these sacrifices: hence in imitation of this sprung the dedication of temples with the Heathens; the first of which among the Romans was that in the capitol at Rome by Romulus; the rites and ceremonies used therein by them may be read in Cicero, Livy, Tacitus, and others f160 . Ver. 64 . The same day did the king hallow the middle of the court that was before the house of the Lord , etc.] The court of the priests that was before the holy place, adjoining to it, in which was the altar of burnt offering; this, or, however, the middle part of it, he sanctified for present use, to offer sacrifices on, for a reason hereafter given: for there he offered burnt offerings and meat offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings ; which was the reason why the middle of the great court was for this time set apart for this service.

Ver. 65 . And at that time Solomon held a feast, and all Israel with him , etc.] Partaking of the parts of the peace offerings which belonged to him, and were offered by way of thanksgiving on the occasion, together with

whatsoever he might as a liberal prince provide for this entertainment: for it was for a great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt ; consisting of a number of people, gathered together from Hamath, which was on the northern border of the land of Israel, to the river of Egypt; either the Nile, or Rhinoculura, a branch of it, which lay on the southern border of the land: and this was kept before the Lord ; as in his presence, with thankfulness to him, and with a view to his glory: seven days and seven days, even fourteen days ; seven days for the dedication of the house, and seven days for the feast of tabernacles, as the Targum; which agrees with (2 Chronicles 7:9), the feast of dedication was first, and began perhaps on the seventh day of the month, as the feast of tabernacles did on the fifteenth: within this time, namely, on the tenth, was a fast day, the day of atonement; which was either observed between the two feasts, or was omitted, which is not likely; or they did not eat and drink until the evening of that day. The Septuagint version, according to the Vatican copy, reads “seven days” only once; (see 2 Chronicles 7:8).

Ver. 66 . On the eighth day he sent the people away , etc.] That is, of the feast of tabernacles, the eighth from the first of that, which was a solemn day, and fell on the twenty second of the month; at the close of which the dismissal was made, or they had leave to go, but they did not until the twenty third, according to (2 Chronicles 7:10) and they blessed the king ; returned him thanks for his care, and charge, and pains, in building the temple; for prayers for them, and the feast he had now made, and wished all health and happiness to him: and went unto their tents joyful and glad of heart ; or to their cities, as the Targum, to their several habitations; being greatly delighted with what they had seen and heard, and partook of especially: for all the goodness the Lord had done for David his servant, and for Israel his people ; in (2 Chronicles 7:10), it is added, “unto Solomon”; for David, in giving him such a son and successor, who according to promise had built the house of the Lord; and for Solomon, in raising him up to such dignity, and enabling him to build such a temple for the worship of God and his glory; and for the people of Israel, in giving them such a king to rule over them, under whom they enjoyed so much peace and prosperity, and the full and free exercise of the true religion, with such accommodations, and in such a splendid manner as now.

CHAPTER - INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 9

This chapter relates a second vision Solomon had at Gibeon, in which

he received an answer to his prayer in the preceding chapter, (1 Kings 9:1-9) that passed between him and Hiram king of Tyre, (1 Kings 9:10-14), the places that Solomon built or repaired, (1 Kings 9:15-19), the Canaanitish people that became bondmen to him, and the officers he had among the children of Israel, (1 Kings 9:20-23) the removal of Pharaoh's daughter to the house built for her, (1 Kings 9:24).

Solomon's attention to religious services, (1 Kings 9:25) and the navy of ships he employed, which brought him in great riches, (1 Kings 9:26-28).

Ver. 1 . And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the Lord , etc.] Which was done in seven years, (1 Kings 6:38). and the king's house ; his own palace, which was finished in thirteen years, (1 Kings 7:1), and all Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do ; all his other buildings, the house for Pharaoh's daughter, the house of the forest of Lebanon, and may include his vineyards, gardens, orchards, and pools of water, made for his pleasure, (Ecclesiastes 2:4-6) in which he succeeded and prospered, (2 Chronicles 7:11).

Ver. 2 . That the Lord appeared to Solomon the second time , etc.] Junius and Tremellius read this verse with the following, to the end of the ninth, in a parenthesis, and render this clause, "for the Lord had appeared", etc. and Piscator translates it, "moreover the Lord appeared", etc. as beginning a distinct narrative from the former; and indeed if the words are to be connected with the preceding, as in our version, this appearance must be thirteen years after the building of the temple, which is not probable; but rather it was the night after the dedication of it, when an answer was returned to Solomon's prayer in the preceding chapter; for that it should be deferred twelve or thirteen years is not reasonable to suppose; and this appearance was the second of the kind and manner: as he had appeared unto him at Gibeon ; in a dream and a vision, and by night, (1 Kings 3:5), (see 2 Chronicles 7:12).

Ver. 3 . And the Lord said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication that thou hast made before me , etc.] With delight and pleasure, and had accepted it; meaning the prayer recorded in the preceding chapter: I have hallowed this house which thou hast built ; by the cloud of glory filling it, and by fire descending from heaven, and consuming the sacrifices offered in it, (2 Chronicles 7:1) to put my name

there for ever ; there to grant his presence, so long as his pure worship should be continued in it; so the Targum adds, “and my Shechinah or divine Majesty shall abide in it, if my will is done there continually:” and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually ; his eyes of Providence should be upon it, to watch over it, and protect it, and his worshippers in it; and he should have a cordial regard to the sacrifices there offered, and to the persons of the offerers, so long as they offered them in a right way, and to right ends and purposes.

Ver. 4 . And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness. etc.] Who, though guilty of many sins and failings in life, yet was sincere and upright in the worship of God, never apostatized from it, or fell into idolatry, which is what is chiefly respected: to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments ; observe all the laws of God, moral, ceremonial, and judicial.

Ver. 5 . Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever , etc.] In a succession in his posterity, until the coming of the Messiah: as I promised unto David thy father, saying, there shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel ; not fail one of his posterity to sit upon it; (see 2 Samuel 7:12,13 <19D211> Psalm 132:11,12). Ver. 6 . But if you shall at all turn from following me, you or your children , etc.] From my worship, as the Targum; either Solomon or his successors, or the people of Israel and their posterity; should they turn their backs on God and his worship, meaning not in a single instance, or in some small degree; but as in the original, “if in turning ye turn” f161 , that is, utterly, and entirely, or wholly turn from him and his worship to other gods, as follows: and will not keep my commandments and my statutes, which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them : neglecting the will and worship of God, go into idolatrous practices, as Solomon himself did.

Ver. 7 . Then will I cut off Israel out of the land I have given them , etc.] Suffer them to be carried captive into other lands, as the ten tribes were into Assyria, and the two tribes to Babylon; which is called a plucking them up by the roots in (2 Chronicles 7:20) and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight : as it was when burnt by Nebuchadnezzar: and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people ; both for their sins and for their miseries; (see Deuteronomy 28:37 Jeremiah 24:9): in (2 Chronicles 7:20) the house or temple is said to be

made a proverb of.

Ver. 8 . And at this house which is high , etc.] The house of the most High, as some render it, and in high esteem, fame, and glory, as well as it was built on an high hill, and was itself one hundred and twenty cubits high, (2 Chronicles 3:4), the Targum is, “and this house which was high shall be destroyed:” everyone that passeth by it shall be astonished ; at the ruins of the temple, and of the city of Jerusalem, which had been so magnificent: and shall hiss ; in scorn and derision of the people of Israel, rejoicing in their ruin: and they shall say, why hath the Lord done thus unto this land, and to this house ? or suffered it to be done, to lie thus in waste and ruins; a land in which it had been said he delighted, and looked unto from one end of the year to the other, and a house he had taken up his dwelling in; surely something more than ordinary, they suggest, must be the cause of all this.

Ver. 9 . And they shall answer , etc.] Who were left in the land when others were carried captive, as were some by Nebuchadnezzar, and who were capable of making the following answer: because they forsook the Lord ; the worship of the Lord their God, as the Targum: who brought forth their fathers out of the land Egypt ; which is observed as an aggravation of their sin: and have taken hold upon other gods : the gods of the people, as the Targum; of the Gentiles, who knew not the true God: and have worshipped them, and served them : even idols of gold and silver, wood and stone; an instance of judicial blindness they were left unto, who had been favoured with a revelation from God: therefore hath the Lord brought upon them all this evil ; their idolatry was the cause of it, than which nothing is more provoking to God.

Ver. 10 . And it came to pass at the end of twenty years , etc.] From the time Solomon first began to build: when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the Lord, and the king’s house; the first was seven years in building, and the other thirteen; in all twenty.

Ver. 11 . (Now Hiram the king of Tyre had furnished Solomon with cedar trees and fir trees , etc.) For the building of both his houses; (see Kings 5:8,10), and with gold, according to all his desire) : which is not before mentioned, and accounts for it from whence Solomon had his gold; if he made no use, as some think he did not, of what his father left him; (see 1 Kings 7:51) with which he covered several parts of the temple, and

made several vessels in it. Hiram traded to Ophir, and had it from thence; and he could supply Solomon with it, and did, before he sent a navy thither: that then Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee ; that is, by or near it, for they were not in the land of Canaan; for then Solomon could not have disposed of them, being allotted and belonging to one of the tribes of Israel, and part of the Lord's inheritance; but they were upon the borders, particularly on the borders of Asher, if Cabul in (Joshua 19:27), can be thought to be the same with these; though some think that Solomon did not give Hiram the possession of these cities, but the royalties and revenues of them, their produce until the debt was paid: but they rather seem to be a gratuity, and a full grant of them, and might be cities which David had conquered, and taken out of the hands of the ancient inhabitants of them; and so Solomon had a right to dispose of them, being left him by his father; for it is plain as yet they were not inhabited by Israelites; (see 2 Chronicles 8:2). They are by a Jewish writer said to be twenty two, very wrongly.

Ver. 12 . And Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him , etc.] For these cities, being in or near Galilee, were not far from Tyre: and they pleased him not ; being either out of repair, as some think; (see 2 Chronicles 8:2) or the ground barren, and unfruitful; which is not likely, being in a very fruitful country, as the tribes on which they bordered were: but they were not agreeable to him, they did not suit with the disposition of him and his people, who were given not to husbandry, but to merchandise; and the land about these would require a good deal of pains and labour to till, which they were not used to.

Ver. 13 . And he said , etc.] By letter to him: what cities are these which thou hast given me, my brother ? so he called him, being not only his neighbour, but his ally, in friendship and covenant with him; and this he said of them not by way of complaint, or contempt, as unworthy of his acceptance; for so munificent a prince as Solomon would never offer to a king to whom he was so much obliged anything mean and contemptible; but as being unsuitable to him, however valuable they might be in themselves, or of advantage to others: and he called them the land of Cabul unto this day ; or rather the words should be rendered impersonally, "they were called so"; for Hiram could not call them by this name to the times of the writer of this book; nor is there any reason to think he would give them any name at all, and much less a contemptible one, as this is thought to be, when he did not choose to accept of them. Some interpret

the word shut up, or unfruitful, sandy, dirty, clayey; so in the Talmud it is said to be a sandy land, and called Cabul, because a man's foot was plunged in it up to his ankles, and is represented as unfruitful. Josephus says, in the Phoenician tongue it signifies "not pleasing", which agrees with what Hiram says, (1 Kings 9:12). Hillerus interprets it "as nothing", they being as nothing to Hiram, of no use to him, whatever they might be to others; and therefore he restored them to Solomon, (2 Chronicles 8:2), which seems to be the best sense of the word. They are the same with Decapolis, (Matthew 4:25) so called from ten cities therein f167 .

Ver. 14 . And Hiram sent to the king one hundred and twenty talents of gold .] Not after the cities had been given him, but before; and it may be rendered "had sent" f168 , and is the sum of the gold he furnished him with for the temple, (1 Kings 9:11) which, according to Brerewood f169 , was 540,000 pounds of our money; and, according to another writer, it amounted to 1,466,400 ducats of gold, taking a talent at 12,220 ducats.

Ver. 15 . And this is the reason of the levy which King Solomon raised , etc.] Both of men to work, (1 Kings 5:13), and of money to defray the expense: it was for to build the house of the Lord ; the temple: and his own house ; or palace: and Millo ; which he repaired: (see Gill on " 1 Samuel 5:9"). and the wall of Jerusalem ; which, as Abarbinel says, was a large building, there being three walls one within another: and Hazor ; a city in the tribe of Naphtali, and which had been a royal city with the Canaanites; (see Joshua 11:1 19:36) and Megiddo ; which was in the tribe of Manasseh, (Joshua 17:11) and Gezer ; which was in the tribe of Ephraim, and formerly a royal city of the Canaanites, (Joshua 10:33 16:3).

Ver. 16 . For Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up, and taken Gezer, and burnt it with fire , etc.] Egypt lay lower than Canaan, and therefore Pharaoh is said to go up to it; what moved him to it is not certain; whether he went of himself provoked, or was moved to it by Solomon, who had married his daughter; however, so he did, and took the place, and burnt it: and slain the Canaanites that dwelt in the city : for though it was given to the tribe of Ephraim, yet they could not drive the Canaanites out of it, who seem to have remained in it to this time; (see Joshua 16:10 Judges 1:29) and given it for a present unto his daughter, Solomon's wife ; not as a dowry with her, but as a present to her; perhaps some time after marriage.

Ver. 17 . And Solomon built Gezer , etc.] Rebuilt it, it having been

burnt, at least great part of it, by Pharaoh when he took it: and Bethhoron the nether ; and the upper also, (2 Chronicles 8:5), which belonged to the tribe of Ephraim, and were on the borders of it, between that and Benjamin, (Joshua 16:3,5 18:13,14).

Ver. 18 . And Baalath , etc.] A city in the tribe of Dan, (Joshua 19:44) and Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land ; or “Tamar”, as in the Cetib, or Scriptural reading; for we go according to the marginal reading, and so Thamato in Ptolemy f171 ; and is thought by some to be the same with Tamar in (Ezekiel 47:19), which Jerom there says is Palmyra. Tamar signifies a palm tree, from whence this city had its name Palmyra, the situation of which place agrees with this; hence we read both in Ptolemy and Pliny of the Palmyrene deserts: the ruins of it are to be seen to this day, and of it this account is given; that it is enclosed on three sides with long ridges of mountains, which open towards the east gradually, to the distance of about an hour’s riding; but to the south stretches a vast plain, beyond the reach of the eye; the air is good, but the soil exceeding barren; nothing green to be seen therein, save some few palm trees in the gardens, and here and there about the town; and from these trees, I conceive, says my author, it obtained its name both in Hebrew and in Latin: it appears to have been of a large extent, by the space now taken up by the ruins; but there are no footsteps of any wall remaining, nor is it possible to judge of the ancient figure of the place. The present inhabitants, as they are poor, miserable, dirty people, so they have shut themselves up, to the number of about thirty or forty families, in little huts made of dirt, within the walls of a spacious court, which enclosed a most magnificent Heathen temple f174 .

Benjamin of Tudela says f175 , it is situated in a wilderness, far from any habitable place, and is four days’ journey from Baalath before mentioned; which place he takes to be the same with Baalbek, in the valley of Lebanon, built by Solomon for Pharaoh’s daughter; which, according to the Arabic geographer f176 , was situated at the foot of Mount Lebanon; and Tadmor seems to be in the land of Hamathzobah, (2 Chronicles 8:3,4). Ver. 19 . And all the cities of store that Solomon had , etc.] In which were his magazines of corn, arms, and ammunition; and these were built in Hamath, (2 Chronicles 8:4) and cities for his chariots ; chariots of war, iron chariots, which were kept in times of peace, in case of necessity, of which Solomon had 1400, (Kings 10:26), and cities for his horsemen ; of which he had 12,000, a standing cavalry: and that which Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem ; besides the temple and his own palace

before mentioned; (see Ecclesiastes 2:4), and in Lebanon ; the house of the forest of Lebanon, which Junius on (Kings 7:2) thinks he built after he had taken Hamathzobah, a royal city of Lebanon; (see 2 Chronicles 8:3,6) or fortresses on Mount Lebanon, which was the northern border of his kingdom: and in all the land of his dominions ; where he might repair or fortify cities, or erect new forts for the safety of his kingdom; now for the doing of all this was the levy both of men and money raised, and of whom next follows.

Ver. 20 . And all the people that were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites , etc.] Who were not destroyed in the times of Joshua, or since, but dwelt in several cities of the land of Israel from those times; (see Judges 1:1), which were not of the children of Israel; not natives of the land of Israel, though they might be proselytes, at least some of them.

Ver. 21 . Their children that were left after them in the land , etc.] The posterity of those left unsubdued in the times of Joshua: whom the children of Israel also were not able utterly to destroy ; in later times, though now it is thought by some it was not for want of power, but because they had made a covenant with them, as the Gibeonites did, and therefore they could not, because it would have been a breach of covenant to have destroyed them; (see 2 Chronicles 8:8), upon these did Solomon levy a tribute of bond service unto this day ; not a tribute of money, which being poor they were not able to pay, but of service, and which being once laid on was continued, and even to the time of the writing of this book. Ver. 22 . But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no bondmen , etc.] For that was contrary to the law; they might be hired servants, but not bond servants, (Leviticus 25:39,40) but they were men of war ; which he kept in pay, a standing army, maintained even in time of peace, in case of necessity, should an enemy attempt to invade or surprise them: and his servants ; in his family and court, who had offices and employments there: and his princes ; ministers of state, counsellors, governors of cities, etc. and his captains ; officers in his army: and rulers of his chariots and his horsemen ; war chariots and troopers; (see 1 Kings 9:19).

Ver. 23 . These were the chief of the officers over Solomon's work , etc.] In building the above houses and cities: five hundred and fifty which bore rule over the people that wrought in the work ; in (2 Chronicles 8:10) they are said to be but two hundred and fifty; now it may be observed,

as is by the Jewish writers, that there were three sorts of those rulers; the lowest rank and order of them consisted of 3300, the next of three hundred which were over the 3300, and being numbered with them made 3600, (2 Chronicles 2:18) and the highest rank of them were two hundred and fifty, and the middlemost and highest being joined together, as they are here, made five hundred and fifty.

Abarbinel reconciles the places thus, the two hundred and fifty were only over those that wrought in the temple; and the five hundred and fifty here were those that were over such that were employed in the various parts of the kingdom.

Ver. 24 . But Pharaoh's daughter came up out of the city of David , etc.] Where he placed her when he first married her, until he had finished his buildings, (1 Kings 3:1), which being done he brought her from thence unto her house, which Solomon had built for her; the reason of which is given, not only because it was the house of David, but because it was holy by the ark being there for some time; and therefore he did not judge it proper that his wife, an Egyptian woman, and sometimes in her impurity, should dwell there; (see 2 Chronicles 8:11), then did he build Millo : this being particularly repeated from (1 Kings 9:15), and following upon what is said of Pharaoh's daughter, has led many Jewish writers to conclude her house was built at Millo; and indeed, without supposing this, it is hard to conceive why it should be observed here; the Targum on (2 Chronicles 8:11) calls her name Bithiah.

Ver. 25 . And three times in a year did Solomon offer burnt offerings and peace offerings upon the altar which he built unto the Lord , etc.] The brasen altar, the altar of burnt offering, which stood in the court of the priests, and by whom he offered. The three times were the feasts of passover, pentecost, and tabernacles, as explained in (2 Chronicles 8:13), not that these were the only offerings, or these the only times he offered; for he offered all other sacrifices, and at all other times commanded in the law of Moses, as on sabbaths and new moons, as expressed in the above place: and he burnt incense upon the altar that was before the Lord ; the altar of incense, which stood in the holy place, right beside the most holy, in which was the ark, the symbol of the divine Presence; not that Solomon burnt incense in person, but by the priests, whom he furnished with incense; for no king might offer incense, as the case of Uzziah shows: so he finished the house ; which respects not the building of it, that had

been observed before, but the service of it; as he had provided all vessels and utensils for the furniture of it, and all things to be used in them; as sacrifices for the altar of burnt offering, incense for the altar of incense, bread for the shewbread table, and oil for the lamps; so he appointed the courses of the priests, Levites, and porters, to do their duty, who went through every part of service assigned them, and completed the whole; (see 2 Chronicles 8:14).

Ver. 26 . And King Solomon made a navy of ships in Eziongeber , etc.] Which was one of the stations of the Israelites, near the wilderness of Sin, or Paran, (Numbers 33:35), it signifies the backbone of a man; and it is said the ridge of rocks before this port were in that form, covered by the sea at high water, and sticking up with various points in a line when it was low. Josephus says in his time it was called Berenice, which is placed by Mela between the Heroopolitic bay, and the promontory Strobilus, or Pharan. It is thought probable to be the same with that which is called by the Arabs Meenah-el-Dsahab, the port of gold, called Dizahab, (Deuteronomy 1:1), which stands upon the shore of the Arabic gulf, about two or three days' distance from Mount Sinai; though by others thought to be the same the Arabs call Calzem, where was a great quantity of wood fit for building ships. It is further described, which is beside Elath, on the shore of the Red sea, in the land of Edom ; and when Edom was subdued by David, this port fell into his hands, and so was in the possession of Solomon; and there being plenty of timber in the parts adjacent, and this being a port in the Red sea, Solomon chose it as proper place to build ships in. Elath, near to which was, is the same the Elanitic bay had its name from; or which (see Gill on “ Deuteronomy 2:8”). Trajan, the Roman emperor, formed a navy in the Red sea f182 , that by it he might ravage and waste the borders of India; and here it seems Solomon's navy went; (see 1 Kings 9:28).

Ver. 27 . And Hiram sent in his navy his servants , etc.] And, according to (2 Chronicles 8:18), ships also but how he could send them from Tyre, which lay in the Mediterranean sea, to the above ports in the Red sea, without going a great way round, is not easy to conceive. Perhaps, as Gussetins conjectures f183 , Hiram had a port in the Red sea for building and sending out ships, for the sake of his eastern navigation, and from thence he sent them to Solomon's ports in the same sea; but if what R. Japhet f184 observes is true, that the Red sea is mixed with the sea of Joppa by means of the river Rhinocurura, as is remarked by a learned man and who approves of the observation, and thinks it does not deserve the

Lightfoot passes on it. If this, I say, can be supported, the difficulty is removed: so Abarbinel asserts f187 , that a branch of the Nile flows into the Red sea: and another, passing through Alexandria, runs into the Mediterranean sea. This is the first navy of ships we read of; in the construction of which, as well as in the art of navigation, the Tyrians no doubt were greatly assisting to Solomon's servants, and which appears by what follows; and they are said to be the first that made use of ships; and the invention of ships of burden, or merchant ships, such as these were, is by Pliny ascribed to Hippus the Tyrian: and the Tyrians were famous for merchandise, which they could not carry on with foreign nations without shipping; (see Isaiah 23:8), the servants Hiram sent in Solomon's navy were shipmen that had knowledge of the sea ; of sea coasts and ports, of the manner of guiding and managing ships at sea, and of the whole art of navigation, so far as then known, for which the Tyrians were famous; (see Ezekiel 27:3-9), with the servants of Solomon ; to instruct and assist them in naval affairs, they not having been used thereunto.

Ver. 28 . And they came to Ophir , etc.] About which place there are various opinions; some take it to be the little island of Zocatora, on the eastern coast of Africa, at a small distance from the straits of Babelmandel; others the island of Ceylon; others Sofala in Africa; some Peru in America; Vatablus the island of Hispaniola in the West Indies, discovered by Columbus, and who thought himself that he had found the land of Ophir, because of the quantity of gold in it; others the southern part of Arabia; but the most reasonable opinion is, says my author f192 , that it is a rich country in Malacca, which is a peninsula in the true Red sea (that part of the ocean which divides Asia from Africa), known by the name of the "golden Chersonese", and which agrees with Josephus f193 ; and at twelve leagues from Malacca there is a very high mountain, which by the natives is called Ophir, and is reported to be, or to have been, very rich in gold, though at present only some tin mines are worked there; and Kircher f194 says the word Ophir is a Coptic or Egyptian word, by which the ancient Egyptians used to call that India which contains the kingdoms of Malabar, Zeilan, the golden Chersonese, and, the islands belonging to it, Sumatra, Molucca, Java, and other neighbouring golden islands. So Varrerius f195 thinks that all that coast in which are contained Pegu, Malaca, and Somatra, is Ophir; which places, besides gold, abound with elephants, apes, and parrots. In the island of Sumatra gold is now found,

especially in Achin, in great plenty; in which is a mountain, called the “golden mountain”, near the mines Reland takes Ophir to be the country round about a city called Oupara or Suphara, in the East Indies, where now stands Goa, the most famous mart in all India at this day for many of those things Solomon traded thither for. Though after all perhaps there was no such place originally as Ophir in India; only the gold brought from thence was like that of Ophir in Arabia, and therefore they called the place so from whence it was had; (see Job 22:24) and fetched from thence gold four hundred and twenty talents , and brought it to King Solomon; which according to Brerewood amounted to 1,890,000 pounds of our money; and according to another writer f199 5,132,400 ducats of gold. Abarbinel says a talent of gold was equal to 12,300 Venetian ducats; in (2 Chronicles 8:18) it is said, that four hundred and fifty talents of gold were brought to Solomon; perhaps thirty might be expended in the voyage, or paid to Hiram’s servants for their wages, as some Jewish writers observe; or in the bulk or ore it might be four hundred and fifty talents, but when purified only four hundred and twenty, as Grotius remarks; either way removes the difficulty; though some think different voyages are respected here and there; of the gold of Ophir frequent mention is made in Scripture.

CHAPTER - INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 10

This chapter contains an account of the queen of Sheba’s visit to King Solomon to her great satisfaction, (1 Kings 10:1-13), of Solomon’s merchandise and riches, and the magnificence of his court, (1 Kings 10:14-23), of the rich presents sent to him, and of the purchase of chariots and horses, and other things, he made, (1 Kings 10:24-29).

Ver. 1 . And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon , etc.] Josephus calls her a queen of Egypt and Ethiopia; but Sheba was in the southern part of Arabia Felix; her name with the Ethiopians is Maqueda f201 , and with the Arabic geographer Belequis. Some think that Sheba, or Saba, is not the name of a country, but of the queen herself; and that she is the same with Sabbe the sibyl mentioned by Pausanias f204 ; but no doubt Sheba or Saba, the metropolis of Arabia Felix, as Philostorgius calls it, is here meant; which Benjamin of Tudela says is called the country of Al Yeman, or the south; and the name of Queen Teiman, given to this queen by an Arabic writer f207 , seems to be the same as the queen of the south, (see Gill on “ Matthew 12:42”). The fame of Solomon’s greatness

and goodness, of his wealth and riches, and especially of his wisdom, had reached her ears; perhaps by means of the ambassadors of princes that had been at Solomon's court, and attended her's. According to an Ethiopic writer it was by Tamerinus, a merchant of her's, she came to hear of him: particularly she heard of his fame concerning the name of the Lord ; his knowledge of the true God, the favour he was in with him, the excellent wisdom he had received from him, and what he had done for his honour and glory: she came to prove him with hard questions ; in things natural, civil, and divine; to try whether he had such a share of knowledge and wisdom it was said he had, she posed him with enigmas, riddles, dark and intricate sayings, to unravel and tell the meaning of. She might be an emblem of the Gentiles, seeking unto Christ, having heard of him, (Isaiah 11:10 John 12:20,21). In (Matthew 12:42) she is said to come from the "uttermost parts of the earth"; wherefore some fetch her from Sumatra in the East Indies, where in an old map no other name is put but Sheba f209 .

Ver. 2 . And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train , etc.] With many of her courtiers and principal men, as well as with a large retinue of servants: with camels that bare spices ; her country abounded both with camels and spices; (see Gill on " Isaiah 60:6"), (see Gill on " Jeremiah 6:20"), and as Pliny observes, who says their spices used to be carried on camels, particularly frankincense, for which Sheba was famous, and is therefore called by him "regio thurifera", the frankincense country f211 , being to be had nowhere else; and Strabo speaks of "cinamon, cassia", and other spices here in such plenty, that the inhabitants burnt the wood of them for fuel; and Diodorus Siculus represents this country as exceeding odoriferous, and as having besides the above spices, balsam, myrrh, calamus, costus, and others, in such abundance that they heated their ovens with them: and very much gold ; (see 1 Kings 10:10), the gold of Sheba is spoken of in (Psalm 72:15) and Pliny observes, that the Sabeans are exceeding rich, as in other things, so in gold; and Diodorus Siculus and Strabo speak of gold found here in large lumps, very pure, and of a fine colour: and precious stones ; as crystals, emeralds, beryls, and chrysolites, mentioned by Diodorus as in those parts; and a late traveller says f218 , that Arabia Felix abounds with balsam, myrrh, cassia, manna, dates, gold, frankincense, and pearl: and when she was come to Solomon ; unto his palace, and admitted into his presence: she communed with him of all that was in her heart ; which she had in her mind to discourse with him about, and which she had laid up in her memory for that purpose; and some things which she had kept to herself, and had never imparted to any before,

as some think; all which she had full liberty from Solomon to propound unto him.

Ver. 3 . And Solomon told her all her questions , etc.] Answered them, told her the meaning of everything she inquired about, expounded her riddles, solved her objections, and gave her satisfaction in all things she proposed unto him: there was not anything hid from the king, which he told her not ; there was not anything, though ever so abstruse and difficult, but what he understood, and gave her a clear and plain solution of.

Ver. 4 . And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom , etc.] Which she perceived by his answers to things relative to all sorts of science, natural, civil, and divine: and the house that he had built ; the singular for the plural, "house for houses"; the house of the Lord, his own house, that for Pharaoh's daughter, and the house of the forest of Lebanon; in all which there appeared not only surprising grandeur and magnificence, but exquisite art and skill; there was a great display of his wisdom in the form and contrivance of them. Josephus says, what exceedingly surprised her, and raised her admiration, was the house of the forest of Lebanon.

Ver. 5 . And the meat of his table , etc.] The various sorts of it, the different dishes, and the multitude of them; (see 1 Kings 4:22,23) and the sitting of his servants ; at table, either with him, or at tables by themselves, yet in his presence; for these were his nobles and courtiers, who were placed in order, according to their rank and degree, which showed wisdom: and the attendance of his ministers ; or the "standing" of those that waited, both at the king's table, and the tables of the lords, who each had their proper place and business assigned; so that the utmost decorum was observed, and no confusion or disorder to be seen: and their apparel : their several liveries, which were distinct according to the posts and offices in which they were, and which no doubt were rich and splendid, as well as various: and his cup bearers ; to serve him and his nobles with wine when called for; though the word signifies liquors f221 , and may design the various sorts of wines, and other drinkables, used by him, of which there was great plenty: and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord ; the steps which he had made to go up from his palace to the temple; which were so curiously devised, and so artificially wrought, that it gave the queen, among other things, a sensible proof of his great wisdom, as well as of his religion and piety. The Septuagint, Vulgate

Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and some others, render the words, “and the burnt offerings which he offered in the house of the Lord”; and so Josephus understood them; she was shown the service of the house of the Lord, as much as could be admitted, and perhaps was told the meaning of it; all which she saw, both in his own house, and in the house of God, and greatly surprised her: so that there was no more spirit in her ; she was quite astonished; like one in an ecstasy, she had no power for a time to speak, what she saw and heard so affected her.

Ver. 6 . And she said to the king , etc.] When she was a little come to herself: it was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom ; which she was ready to call in question when she first heard it; at least she thought it was greatly exaggerated, but now she found it was strictly true.

Ver. 7 . Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it , etc.] That is, she did not believe the whole of what was related to her; somewhat of it she credited, and supposed there was something grand and extraordinary in it, or she would never have taken such a journey; but she did not believe that all could be true; she thought things were too much magnified: and, behold, the half was not told me ; of what she now saw and heard: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard ; the inward endowments of his mind, and the outward magnificence of his court, exceeded the relation of them to her; they were beyond expression, they were so great that reporters could not hyperbolize upon them, nor even come up to them in their account of them, and in which yet men are apt to exceed.

Ver. 8 . Happy are thy men , etc.] The men of Israel, that had a king over them so wise, so great, so good: happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom ; who were now present, and to whom she pointed, and may respect not his nobles and courtiers only, but his menial servants, who had an opportunity of often hearing the wise sayings which dropped from his lips; and which no doubt were means of greatly improving their knowledge and understanding in things natural and divine.

Ver. 9 . Blessed be the Lord thy God , etc.] Of whom she might have better notions than when she came out of her own country: which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel ; loved him with a

love of complacency and delight, was Jedidiah, as he called him, beloved of the Lord, and therefore he chose him and preferred him to be king before his elder brother: because the Lord loved Israel for ever ; to establish them as a kingdom for ever as they were, so long as obedient to him; (see 2 Chronicles 9:8), therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice ; not merely for the sake of honour and glory, much less to indulge to pleasure and luxury, and still less to oppression and tyranny; but to administer justice and judgment to the people, which is the principal end of government; (see Psalm 72:1,2).

Ver. 10 . And she gave the king one hundred and twenty talents of gold , etc.] The same sum that Hiram sent him, (see Gill on “ 1 Kings 9:14”) this fulfilled the prophecy, so far as it respected Solomon, (Psalm 72:15) and of spices very great store, and precious stones ; (see 1 Kings 10:2) there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon; that is, into Judea. Josephus reports f223 , that some say that the balsamic plant, which Judea was afterwards so famous for, was brought by this queen, and a gift of hers to Solomon; and Diodorus Siculus speaks of it as in Arabia, and not to be found in any other part of the world.

Ver. 11 . And the navy also of Hiram that brought gold from Ophir , etc.] This perhaps was before Solomon was concerned with Hiram in navigation and merchandise; though in (2 Chronicles 9:10) both their servants are said to bring it; and it is here inserted perhaps to show that Solomon had not his gold, at least all of it, from the queen of Sheba; but much from Hiram, who fetched it from Ophir; and as this was in India, as observed on (1 Kings 9:28), many writers make mention of gold in that part of the world, as Diodorus Siculus f225 , Strabo f2226 , Dionysius f227 , Curtius f228 , Pliny f229 , and others: and this navy also brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees : or algum trees, by transposition of letters, (2 Chronicles 9:10,11), which some of the Jewish writers take to be coral, which is not likely; others Brasil, rather ebony, which was peculiar to India, as both Solinus and Virgil say; Strabo makes mention of strange trees in India: and precious stones ; of which there is great variety and plenty in that country, as related by Dionysius f234 , as diamonds, beryls, jaspers, topazes, and amethysts, and by Curtius f235 , Solinus f236 , and others.

Ver. 12 . And the king made of the almug trees pillars for the house of the Lord, and for the king's house , etc.] Or terraces, as in (2 Chronicles

9:11), causeways; and means the ascent or causeway he made from his own house to the temple; the pavement of which, as Jarchi interprets the word here, was made of the wood of these trees; or the supports of it, or rather the rails on each side, on which men might stay themselves as they passed along, as Ben Gersom; and since this ascent was admired by the queen of Sheba, it is particularly observed what wood it was made of, and from whence it came: harps also, and psalteries for singers; these musical instruments were made of the same wood; Josephus says of amber, and that their number was 400,000: there came no such almuq trees, nor were seen unto this day; not in the land of Israel, neither before nor since, (see 2 Chronicles 9:11).

Ver. 13 . And King Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, etc.] Some curious things she saw, and was desirous of, she asked for, and had them: besides that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty; of his own good will and pleasure, without asking: so she turned and went to her own country: the country of Sheba in Arabia Felix: she and her sergeants: the train or retinue she brought with her, which was large, (1 Kings 10:2). Ver. 14 . Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred and sixty and six talents of gold .] From Ophir and Tarshish, and wherever he traded; which was of our money, according to Berewood f238, 2,997,000 pounds; or as another learned man f239, who makes it equal to 5,138,520 ducats of gold.

Ver. 15 . Besides that he had of the merchantmen, and of the traffic of the spice merchants, etc.] What they paid him as a duty or custom for the importation of their goods: and of all the kings of Arabia; who were subject to him, and paid him a yearly tribute, or at least made presents, (see 1 Kings 4:21,24) and of the governors of the country; who were viceroys or deputy governors of countries conquered by his father, and who collected tribute from the people, and paid it to him.

Ver. 16 . And King Solomon made two hundred targets of beaten gold, etc.] Which were a larger sort of shields, which covered the whole body; and these were made of gold beaten with the hammer, or drawn into plates, being melted like wax; so the Poeni or Carthaginians made shields of gold f240: six hundred shekels of gold went to one target; which is to be understood not of the weight, but of the price or value of them, which amounted to four hundred and fifty pounds of our money; so Brerewood f241 .

Ver. 17 . And he made three hundred shields of beaten gold , etc.] Which were a lesser sort: three pounds of gold went to one shield ; or three hundred shekels, as in (2 Chronicles 9:16) a hundred shekels made one pound; so that these were but half the value of the former, and one of them was worth but two hundred and twenty five pounds: Eupolemus f242 , an Heathen writer, makes mention of those golden shields Solomon made, and which were made for show, and not for war, as follows: and the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon ; one part of which was made an armoury of, (see Song of Solomon 4:4).

Ver. 18 . Moreover, the king made a great throne of ivory , etc.] To sit on and judge his people; and ivory being white, may denote the purity, justice, and equity with which he judged; the white throne in (Revelation 20:11) may be an allusion to this; the ivory he had from Tarshish, (1 Kings 10:22) and overlaid it with the best gold ; for the greater splendour and majesty of it; not that he covered it all over, for then the ivory would not be seen, but interlined it, or studded it with it, whereby it appeared the more beautiful and magnificent. Such a throne of gold and ivory was decreed to Caesar by the Romans f243 .

Ver. 19 . The throne had six steps , etc.] Up to the footstool of the throne, which was of gold, (2 Chronicles 9:18) and was high, that everyone in court might see him, and the better hear the sentence he gave: and the top of the throne was round behind ; had a semicircle at the top of it, like an alcove: and there were stays on either side on the place of the seat ; or “hands” f244 , such as the arms of a chair, to lean and rest upon: and two lions stood beside the stays ; which were not only ornamental, and for support of the stays, but expressive of majesty, and of undaunted courage and resolution to do justice, and of the danger such expose themselves to, who oppose magistrates in the discharge of their office; and in which Solomon was a type of Christ, the lion of the tribe of Judah; and for the same reasons were the like portraits on the steps, as follows.

Ver. 20 . And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps , etc.] There was a lion on each side of every step, a symbol of royal power, as before observed; so the Egyptians placed lions under the throne of Orus f245 : there was not the like made in any kingdom ; for the matter and form of it, for its grandeur and magnificence; there was none at least at that time, whatever has been since; for this is the

Ver. 21 . And all King Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold , etc.] Such quantities of it were brought to him from Ophir, and paid to him in tribute, and given him as presents: and all the vessels of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold ; not only what were used in his palace at Jerusalem, but in his country house at some little distance: none were of silver; it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon ; to make plate of; or silver plate was but little esteemed, and scarce any use of it made in Solomon's palace, if at all: though doubtless it was elsewhere, and especially silver as money.

Ver. 22 . For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish, with the navy of Hiram , etc.] Tharshish was not the place the navy went from, but whither it went to, as appears from (2 Chronicles 9:21 20:36) and designs not Tarsus in Cilicia; nor Tartessus in Spain, or Gades, or which was however near it; though it appears from Strabo and Mela that the Phoenicians were acquainted with those parts, and were possessed of them; and particularly, according to Velleius Paterculus f248 , the navy of Tyre traded thither before the days of Solomon; and Vitringa is clear in it, that these were ships that traded to Tartessus, with the ships of Tyre; and it is more likely that that place is meant than Carthage, now called Tunis, in Africa; though the Targum here calls it the navy, the navy of Africa; but as Tharshish is sometimes used for the sea in general, here it may signify a particular sea, so called: and which Josephus names the Tarsic sea, the same with the Indian sea; and points to the same country where Ophir was, which was washed by it, and to which the two fleets joined were bound.

This is observed, to account for it how Solomon came by so much gold: once in three years came the navy of Tharshish ; it returned in such a space of time; navigation not being improved as now, and sailing by coasts, and what with their stay abroad to sell and purchase goods, and to refit their ships, as well as sometimes contrary winds, they were so long in performing this voyage, which is now done in a few months: bringing gold and silver ; so that silver was accounted of, and used for some purposes, though not for the king's plate: ivory, and apes, and peacocks ; ivory is the elephant's tooth, as the word signifies; some of those are of an almost incredible size; some are said to be of ninety, others one hundred and twenty five pounds weight; Vartomannus says, he saw in Sumatra, where some place Ophir, one that weighed three hundred and thirty pounds;

though, according to the Ethiopians the ivory is from the horns; and so say Pausanias and others, (see Ezekiel 27:15) but it is commonly supposed to be of the two teeth in the upper jaw that stands out; and whether they are called horns or teeth, they are the same of which ivory is: of elephants there were large numbers in India, bigger and stronger than those in Africa; which latter were afraid of the former, as Diodorus Siculus f254 , Curtius f255 , and Pliny relate; so Virgil speaks of ivory as fetched from India and Horace also, which must be East India, for there are no ivory nor apes in the West Indies f259 : “apes” or “monkeys” were then, as now, brought from those parts.

Strabo reports, that when the Macedonians under Alexander were there, such a vast number of them came out of the woods, and placed themselves on the open hills, that they took them for an army of men set in battle array to fight them. Vartomannus speaks of monkeys in the country of Calecut, of a very small price: near Surat apes are in great esteem, nor will they suffer them to be killed on any account f262 . There are various sorts of apes, some more like to goats, others to dogs, others to lions, and some to other animals, as Philostorgius relates; and who also says the sphinx is one sort of them, and which he describes on his own sight of it as resembling mankind in many things, and as a very subtle animal; and so Solinus reckons such among apes; but what come nearest in name and sound to the “kuphim” of Solomon here are those Pliny calls “cephi”, whose fore feet he says are like the hands of men, and their hinder feet like the feet and thighs of men; and Strabo f266 describes a creature found in Ethiopia, called by him “ceipus” or “cepus”, which has a face like a satyr, and the rest of it is between a dog and a bear.

There is a creature called “cebus” by Aristotle f267 , and is described as having a tail, and all the rest like a man; according to Ludolf f268 , “cephus” is the “orangoutang” of the Indians. The word for peacocks should rather be rendered “parrots”, so Junius; which are well known to come from India f269 , and from thence only, according to Pausanias f270 ; Vartomannus f271 says, that at Calecut there are parrots of sundry colours, as green and purple, and others of mixed colours, and such a multitude of them, that men are appointed to keep them from the rice in the fields, as we keep crows from corn; and that they are of a small price, one is sold for two pence, or half a souse; and the number of them may be accounted for, because the Brachmans, the priests, reckon them sacred, and therefore the Indians eat them not f272 . Curtius designs these, when he says, in India

are birds, which are taught to imitate man's voice; and Solinus says, that India only produces the green parrot, that is, the East Indies, the West Indies not being then discovered; though some think they were, and that it was thither Solomon's navy went: certain it is there are parrots of various colours in the West Indies, which P. Martyr of Angleria frequently makes mention of in his Decades. Huetius derives the Hebrew word here used from *hkt*, which he says signifies to "join" or "adhere" to anything, as these birds will; cling to, and hang by their bills and nails on a branch of a tree, etc. so that they are not easily separated from it; the word is used in (Deuteronomy 33:3) and, according to some, in this sense.

But, after all, if it should be insisted on, as it is by many, that "peacocks" are meant, these also are found in India. Alexander the great first saw them in this country, which so amazed him, that he threatened to punish those severely that should kill any of them f277. Vartomannus makes mention of them as in great numbers in some parts of India; and they are caught and sold at an easy rate at Surat f279, and make part both of their game, and of their grand entertainments f280; Aeianus often speaks of them as in India in great numbers, and in great esteem.

Ver. 23. So King Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom.] In which he was an eminent type of Christ; (see Ephesians 3:8 Colossians 2:3).

Ver. 24. And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.] For it was all of God, a peculiar gift of his; by "all the earth" is meant the inhabitants of it, and only them, and those the more principal; who came from the several parts of it, hearing the fame of his wisdom, to know the truth of it, and to improve themselves by it.

Ver. 25. And they brought every man his present, etc.] To recommend them, and introduce them into his presence: vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, and horses, and mules, a rate year by year; everyone brought according to the commodities of his country; and they did yearly, out of great respect to him, and in veneration of him for his wisdom, and for the advantages they received by his wise counsels and instructions; besides, it was the custom of the eastern countries not to pay a visit, especially to great personages, without carrying a present.

Ver. 26 . And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen , etc.] Both for war; for though it was a time of peace, he provided against the worst, lest an enemy should come upon him suddenly, and when unprepared: and he had one thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen ; of the latter (see Gill on “ 1 Kings 4:26”) whom he bestowed in the cities for chariots, and with the king at Jerusalem ; some of the horsemen were quartered in the cities where the chariots were placed, and some of them in Jerusalem, to be near the king’s person, and to be a guard to him on occasion. Josephus says, half of them were in Jerusalem about the king, and the rest were dispersed through the king’s villages.

Ver. 27 . And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones , etc.] By the vast quantity he received from Tarshish; this is an hyperbolical expression: and cedars made he to be as the sycamore trees that are the vale for abundance ; not by the growth of them, but by the importation of them from the dominion of Hiram; this is said in the same figurative way; of the sycamore trees, Rauwolff says f283 , they are what the Moors and Arabians calls “mumeitz”; which he describes to be as large and as high as white mulberry trees, and having almost the same leaves, but rounder, and their fruit not unlike our figs, only sweeter, and no little seeds within, and not so good; and are therefore not esteemed, and are commonly sold to the poorer sort, and that they grow in all fields and grounds; of which (see Gill on “ Amos 7:14”).

Ver. 28 . And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt , etc.] To mount his horsemen with, and draw his chariots; which seems contrary to the command in (Deuteronomy 17:16) and linen yarn; the king’s merchants received the linen yarn at a price ; or rather linen itself; or linen garments, as Ben Gersom; linen being the staple commodity of Egypt, (see Isaiah 19:9), but no mention is made of yarn in (2 Chronicles 9:28), and the word rendered “linen yarn” signifies a confluence or collection of waters and other things; and the words may be rendered, “as for the collection, the king’s merchants received the collection at a price”; that is, the collection of horses, a large number of them got together for sale; these they took at a price set upon them f284 , which is as follows.

Ver. 29 . And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver , etc.] Which, reckoning at two shillings and six pence a

shekel, amounted to seventy five pounds; but a shekel was not worth more than two shillings and four pence farthing; and an horse for one hundred and fifty ; and this being the fourth part of the above sum, the Jews gather from hence that there were four horses in a chariot; the horses must be reckoned one with another, the whole collection of them, or otherwise no doubt but one horse was better than another; and it was a pretty large price to give for a horse in those times; which, taking a shekel at the lowest rate, must be upwards of ten pounds; and which is too great a sum still for a custom or tribute to be paid for them, whether to Pharaoh or Solomon, as some understand it: and so for all the kings of the Hittites ; perhaps the same with the kings of Arabia, (1 Kings 10:15) and for the kings of Syria; those of Damascus, Zobah, etc. did they bring them out by their means ; that is, by the means of Solomon's merchants, who bought them out of Egypt, and sold them to these kings.

CHAPTER - INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 11

This chapter relates the false steps Solomon took, notwithstanding all his wisdom, in marrying strange wives, and worshipping other gods, (<111101> Kings 11:1-8) upon which the Lord threatens him to rend the kingdom in his son's time, (1 Kings 11:9-13) and he raised up adversaries against him, Hadad, Rezon, and Jeroboam, (1 Kings 11:14-26) of which last an account is given, and of his being assured by Ahijah the prophet of his having ten of the tribes of Israel given to him; which Solomon having notice of sought to slay him, (1 Kings 11:27-40) and the chapter is concluded with an account of Solomon's death and burial, (1 Kings 11:41-43).

Ver. 1 . But King Solomon loved many strange women , etc.] His love was a lustful and not a lawful one, and of women who were not only of foreign countries, but not his lawful wives, and these many: together with the daughter of Pharaoh ; besides her, or as he loved her, and perhaps more; his sin was not that he loved her who was his lawful wife, but others with her; it is very probable she was a proselytess, and had no hand in turning him to idolatry, since we read not of any high place built for an Egyptian idol: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites ; all of the neighbouring nations. Some think he did this with political views, to get intelligence of the state of those countries, or to abate and extinguish their enmity; but it rather seems to be the fruit of lust or pride.

Ver. 2 . Of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you , etc.] That is, they should not intermarry with one another; this is to be understood of the last mentioned, the Hittites, who were one of the seven nations this law respected, (Deuteronomy 7:1,3) for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods ; which is the reason given for the making the above law, and was sadly verified in Solomon: Solomon clave unto these in love ; he not only took them, but kept them, and expressed a strong affection for them.

Ver. 3 . And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines , etc.] In all 1000, a prodigious number; though these might not be all for use, but for state after the manner of the eastern monarchs; these were a far greater number than are alluded to in (Song of Solomon 6:8), unless the virgins without number there, were such of these as were not defiled by him; but the number here seems plainly referred to in (Ecclesiastes 7:28), and his wives turned away his heart ; both from his duty to his God, and from attendance to his business as a king, especially the former, as follows.

Ver. 4 . And it came to pass, when Solomon was old , etc.] Toward the latter end of his reign, when he might be near sixty years of age; for Rehoboam his son and successor was forty one when he began to reign, (1 Kings 14:21) which is observed either as an aggravation of the sin of Solomon, that in his old age, when by long experience he might have been thought to be still wiser, and less lustful: and yet that his wives turned away his heart after other gods ; or as pointing at the advantage his wives took of his age: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father ; who, though guilty of many sins, never inclined to idolatry; his heart was always right in that point, and sincere in his worship, (see Psalm 18:20-24).

Ver. 5 . And Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians , etc.] Enticed by the Zidonian women, or woman, he had, (1 Kings 11:1). According to the Phoenician histories f285 , Solomon married a daughter of Hiram, king of Tyre and Zidon; so Clemens of Alexandria says f286 , that Hiram gave his daughter to Solomon; Ashtoreth is Astarte, the same with the Venus of the Greeks, so Suidas f287 ; and Lucian expressly says, the Sidonians had a temple, said by them to belong

to Astarte, which he takes to be the moon; and both Venus and Juno signify the same planet; (see Gill on “ Judges 2:13”) and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites ; the same with Molech, (1 Kings 11:7). (See Gill on “ Leviticus 18:21”). (See Gill on “ Amos 1:13”). After this he was drawn by his Ammonitish wife, or wives, (1 Kings 11:1), though the Jewish writers think he did not worship these idols, but suffered his wives to do it, and connived at it, which was his sin; so Ben Gersom and Abarbinel.

Ver. 6 . And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord , etc.] As idolatry is, nothing more provoking to him: and went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father ; for though he did not relinquish the worship of the true God, and the service of the temple, yet inasmuch as he worshipped other gods besides, or connived at the worship of them, he did not wholly, and constantly, and solely serve the Lord, as his father did.

Ver. 7 Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Mesh , etc.] Of this idol, (see Gill on “ Jeremiah 48:7”), an high place for which he ordered to be built, or at least suffered it to be built, at the instigation of his Moabitish woman or women, (1 Kings 11:1), this was built in the hill that is before Jerusalem; on the mount of Olives, as Jarchi, called from hence afterwards the mount of corruption, (2 Kings 23:15) and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon, (1 Kings 11:5).

Ver. 8 . And likewise did he for all his strange wives , etc.] That is, built high places for their idols, or suffered them to be built; for when he had done it for one, he could not refuse it to another, without greatly disobliging them; even for as many of them, which burnt incense, and sacrificed unto their gods ; the gods of the countries from whence they came, and in the worship of which they had been brought up: this shows that the best and wisest of men, when left to themselves, may do the worst and most foolish of all things; as nothing can be more so than the worship of such wretched deities.

Ver. 9 . And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel , etc.] Or from the fear of him, as the Targum, which must in a great measure be cast off, or he could not have given in to idolatry in any shape as he did; for it was for that the Lord was displeased, the which nothing is more provoking to him, as may be often

observed: which had appeared unto him twice ; once at Gibeon, and again after his prayer at the dedication of the temple, (1 Kings 3:5 9:2), which is mentioned here as an aggravation of his sin, that he should fall into it, when the Lord had condescended to appear to him so graciously.

Ver. 10 . And had commanded him concerning this thing that he should not go after other gods , etc.] Which is another aggravation of his sin that it was against an express command of God, and was particularly given him, and he was warned to observe it, and threatened with evil should he break it: but he kept not that which the Lord commanded : (see 1 Kings 9:5-7).

Ver. 11 . Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon , etc.] Not in a vision, as before, but by a prophet; the Jews say f289 , Ahijah the Shilonite, which is probable, (see 1 Kings 11:29) forasmuch as this is done of thee, that thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes which I have commanded thee ; but broke them by his idolatry: I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and I will give it to thy servant ; meaning Jeroboam, who was not only a subject, but in office under him, (1 Kings 11:26,28).

Ver. 12 . Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake , etc.] Not for the merits of David, but the promises made to him, (2 Samuel 7:12,13), but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son ; and immediate successor, Rehoboam.

Ver. 13 . Howbeit, I will not rend away all the kingdom , etc.] The whole kingdom of Israel: but will give one tribe to thy son ; but it seems he had both Benjamin and Judah, and only ten tribes were rent from him; the reason of this mode of expression may be, either because he gave him one of the tribes of Israel, besides that of Judah, which was his own tribe; or only the tribe of Judah is meant, the whole tribe of Benjamin not being his, since Bethel, and some other places in that tribe, were in the possession of Jeroboam; or rather both these are called but one, because their inheritances lay together, and were mixed with one another; and particularly both had a share in the city of Jerusalem, and the kingdom always after the division went by the name of Judah only: and this tribe was given for David my servant's sake ; because of the promise to him, that there should not want one of his seed to sit on his throne, (1 Kings 9:5) and for Jerusalem's sake, whom I have chosen ; to have the house of his sanctuary and worship in, and therefore thought fit to have one rule there,

that, would have a regard to his service in it.

Ver. 14 . And the Lord stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite , etc.] Though he did not take his kingdom from him for his sin, he chastised him with the rod of men, as he said he would; suffering one, and then another, to rise up and disturb his peace in his old age, (see Samuel 7:14) he was of the king's seed in Edom ; of the blood royal.

Ver. 15 . For it came to pass, when David was in Edom , etc.] Fighting with the Edomites, and subduing them, and putting garrisons in the land, (Samuel 8:14) and Joab the captain of the host was gone up to bury the slain : the Israelites that fell in battle, or whom the Edomites afterwards, through stratagem and surprise, fell upon in their garrisons and destroyed, and which caused Joab to go thither to bury them, and take vengeance on the Edomites for it; or these were the Edomites slain by David and Joab; and it has been always reckoned a piece of humanity to bury the dead of an enemy, and is to the honour of the conqueror, (see Ezekiel 39:12,13) or to suffer the enemy to bury them themselves: it is said f290 , that Hercules was the first that brought up this practice, and that before they were left on the field, to be devoured by dogs; so they were in the times of the Trojan war, as appears by the writings of Homer; but burying them, in later times, was used by the Romans and Greeks; and Josephus delivers it as a law of Moses to bury enemies, and not suffer any dead to lie without partaking of the earth, nor to pass by or overlook any unburied; but from whence he took it, or grounds it upon, is not very evident; this is the first mention of it; though the Targum is, "to strip the slain:" after he had smitten every male in Edom ; as he thought, intending to root out the name of them; being enraged at their falling upon the garrisons, if that was the case.

Ver. 16 . For six months did Joab remain with all Israel , etc.] With the whole army: until he had cut off every male in Edom ; as he supposed; for it was not fact, since after this they increased again, and became a powerful people, and had a king over them, and revolted from Judah, (2 Kings 8:20-22).

Ver. 17 . That Hadad fled , etc.] While Joab was burying the slain: he and certain Edomites of his father's servants with him ; who either was a king, and these some of his officers and courtiers; or however was of the royal family, and had an equipage, and these some of them: to go into Egypt ; that was their view at first setting out, where they might hope

for help, at least shelter: Hadad being yet a little child ; whom his father's servants hid, while Joab was making the slaughter he did, and took the opportunity of fleeing with him while he was burying the dead.

Ver. 18 . And they arose out of Midian , etc.] A country which lay in their way to Egypt, and where it seems they made some stay, and then departed: and came to Paran ; near to which was a wilderness of the same name, in which the Israelites wandered when they came out of Egypt, and which lay between Edom and Egypt: and they took men with them out of Paran ; either as guides and guards through the wilderness, or to make the better appearance before Pharaoh, and that they might meet with the better reception: and they came to Egypt, unto Pharaoh king of Egypt ; and told their case, and informed him who Hadad was: who, pitying an unfortunate young prince, gave him an house ; for him and his servants to dwell in: and appointed him victuals ; a daily provision for him and his men: and gave him land ; for his servants to cultivate, and from thence to raise a revenue for his support; the Jewish writers say he gave him cities to rule over; but as he was but a little child when he came, it cannot be thought that was done, at least directly.

Ver. 19 . And Hadad found great favour in the sight of Pharaoh , etc.] Perhaps for his comely personage, princely qualities, and good behaviour, as he grew up: so that he gave him to wife the sister of his own wife, the sister of Tahpenes the queen ; it seems the kings of Egypt used to marry their favourites to great personages; (see Genesis 41:45).

Ver. 20 . And the sister of Tahpenes bore him Genubath his son , etc.] Which signifies "stealth", and the name might be given in memory of himself being carried away by stealth from his own land: whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh's house : who was so fond of the child, that she took it, and weaned it for her in the king's palace: and Genubath was in Pharaoh's household among the sons of Pharaoh ; brought up among them, as if he was one of them.

Ver. 21 . And when Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers , etc.] Was dead and buried, as the death of princes is soon known in other countries, and especially a king of such fame as David: and that Joab the captain of the host was dead : whose name might be terrible to Hadad, because of the slaughter of men he had made in his country: Hadad said unto Pharaoh, let me depart, that I may go to mine own country ; with

a view and an hope to recover it, now David and Joab were dead.

Ver. 22 . Then Pharaoh said unto him, but what hast thou lacked with me , etc.] Either of an equipage suitable to his birth and marriage, or of provisions for his household, or of honour and respect, or of any favour from him: that, behold, thou seekest to go into thine own country ? as if not well used where he was, or would be better provided for there: and he answered, nothing ; he wanted nothing at all, had all he could wish for: howbeit, let me go in any wise : he had such an extreme desire to go, that he begged it might not be denied him on any account; whether he acquainted Pharaoh with his view in this request is not said, but it is probable he did, and it is certain Pharaoh gave him leave to go, (see Kings 11:25).

Ver. 23 . And God stirred him up another adversary , etc.] One from the north, as the other was from the south: Rezon, the son of Eliadah, which fled from his lord Hadadezer king of Zobah : when David fought with him; and this man seeing the battle go against his master, and that he was like to be worsted, deserted him and fled, (see 2 Samuel 8:3).

Ver. 24 . And he gathered men unto him , etc.] Perhaps some of the scattered forces of his master: and became captain over a band, when David slew them of Zobah ; some that escaped enlisted under this man, and lived by plunder the remainder of David's reign, and so in the reign of Solomon unto his old age, when his heart was turned away from God to idols, by his wives: and they went to Damascus, and dwelt therein, and reigned in Damascus ; Rezon and his men went thither, not in David's time, for he put a garrison there, (2 Samuel 8:6) but towards the close of Solomon's days, and when Hadad set up in Edom, which gave him the hint to do the same at Damascus, of which he became king, and was the founder of that kingdom; after him there was a long race of kings there.

Ver. 25 . And he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon , etc.] Not all the days of his life, (see 1 Kings 5:4), but all his days, from his first going into idolatry, to the end of his life: beside the mischief that Hadad did ; and which, whatever it was, was not done till this time; for either, when he got leave from Pharaoh to go into his country, he lay hid there, waiting an opportunity to seize upon it; or by means of Pharaoh he got himself to be king of it, through the permission of Solomon, paying a tribute to him; but when Solomon was grown old, he revolted and refused

to pay it, and rebelled against him, and gave him much trouble: and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria ; not Hadad, but Rezon; he had an aversion to them, was a thorn in their side, and gave them much trouble, as well as had them in contempt, and bid them defiance, having made himself not only master of Damascus, but of all Syria.

Ver. 26 . And Jeroboam the son of Nebat , etc.] According to some Jewish writers f293 , this was Sheba the son of Bichri; but, as Kimchi observes, he was of the tribe of Benjamin, this of Ephraim; and besides, his head was cut off, and thrown over the wall to Joab, (2 Samuel 20:1,22), an Ephrathite of Zereda ; some where in the tribe of Ephraim, but nowhere else mentioned. There was a famous Jewish doctor, before the times of Christ, of this place, as it seems, who was called Jose ben Joezer, a man of Zereda f294 : Solomon's servant ; not only his subject, but one that had been advanced by him to an office, and served under him, (1 Kings 11:28), whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow woman ; who very probably was supported by this her son, an industrious and ingenious man: even he lifted up his hand against the king ; either against Solomon, by reproaching and reproving him for some things he did; or rather against Rehoboam his son, which was very ungrateful.

Ver. 27 . And this was the cause that he lifted up his hand against the king , etc.] The occasion of it, his being advanced to some posts under Solomon, which elated him, and what passed between him and the prophet Ahijah, after related: Solomon built Millo, and repaired the breaches of the city of David his father : in the oversight of which, it is supposed by the Jews, he employed this man, who reproached him for doing these works; building an house in Millo for Pharaoh's daughter, and stopping up the passage to the city of David, and the people's access thither upon occasion.

Ver. 28 . And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valour , etc.] A man of great strength of body, and fortitude of mind: and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious ; in what he was set about in the above buildings and repairs: he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph ; the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, to be a prince or a deputy governor of them; or rather to collect the king's tax from them, or the revenues of that part of the country, (see Proverbs 22:29).

Ver. 29 . And it came to pass at that time, when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem , etc.] Either to enter upon his new office: or having been with

Solomon to pay in the revenues, and to make up his accounts with him was going back to the country to do the duty of his office: that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way ; not accidentally, but purposely was in the way to meet him, and converse with him; this prophet was of the city of Shiloh, and where was now his abode, (see 1 Kings 14:2) and he had clad himself with a new garment ; not Jeroboam, but the prophet, and that by the direction of the Lord, for the following purpose: and they two were alone in the field : it is possible Jeroboam might have some servants with him; but Ahijah desiring some private conversation with him, he sent them onwards, or bid them stay at some distance; who yet might be capable of observing what was done, though not of hearing what was said; or otherwise how should Solomon come to the knowledge of it? (1 Kings 11:40).

Ver. 30 . And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him , etc.] This looks as if it was Jeroboam's garment, having got a new one to appear before the king in; though the sense may be this, that the prophet took hold of his own garment that was upon himself: and rent it in twelve pieces ; as symbolical of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Ver. 31 . And he said to Jeroboam, take thee ten pieces , etc.] Of the twelve, an emblem of the ten tribes he was to have: for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon ; that is, out of his family: and will give ten tribes unto thee ; to rule over.

Ver. 32 . But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake , etc.] (See Gill on “ 1 Kings 11:13”). Ver. 33 . Because that they have forsaken me , etc.] My worship, as the Targum; both Solomon and the children of Israel following his example; which is not to be wondered at, considering how prone they always were to idolatry: and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon ; of which deities, (see Gill on “ 1 Kings 11:5, 7”). and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as [did] David his father ; the several laws of God relating to religious worship especially, which David was a strict observer of; and therefore Solomon, having such a pattern before him, was the more blameworthy.

Ver. 34 . Howbeit, I will not take the kingdom out of his hand , etc.] Not any part of it, (1 Kings 11:12), but I will make him prince all the days

of his life ; that is, he shall continue to hold the government of all the tribes so long as he lives: for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes ; (see 1 Kings 11:12), or was well pleased with, as the Targum; for keeping the commands of God from right principles, and with right views, is well pleasing to him.

Ver. 35 . But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand , etc.] All but the tribes of Judah and Benjamin: and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes : signified by ten pieces of the rent garment he had given him, (1 Kings 11:31).

Ver. 36 . And unto his son will I give one tribe , etc.] Judah and Benjamin reckoned as one; (see Gill on “ 1 Kings 11:13”), that David my servant may have a light always before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there; or a kingdom, as the Targum; or an illustrious prince, a successor, shining in royal majesty and glory, to guide and direct, cheer and comfort, the people of Israel; be an honour to David's family, and a means of continuing the pure worship of God in the temple at Jerusalem; (see 2 Samuel 21:17 <19D217> Psalm 132:17).

Ver. 37 . And I will take thee , etc.] From the low estate in which he was, to be king: and thou shall reign according to all that thy soul desireth ; he being ambitious of the kingdom, and having already formed in his mind some designs upon it: and shall be king over Israel ; the ten tribes.

Ver. 38 . And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee , etc.] And be obedient thereunto: and wilt walk in my ways ; directed to in the law of Moses: and do that is right in my sight, to keep my statutes, and my commandments ; those particularly respecting divine worship: as David my servant did ; who very diligently and constantly attended to the ordinances of religion: that I will be with thee ; to guide and direct, protect and defend, prosper and succeed: and build thee a sure house, as I built for David ; continue the succession of the kingdom in his posterity: and will give Israel unto thee; to rule over them .

Ver. 39 . And I will for this afflict the seed of David , etc.] For the idolatry Solomon had been guilty of, and connived at: but not for ever ; for when the ten tribes were carried captive, the kingdom of Judah flourished under Hezekiah, Josiah, etc. and though the tribe of Judah was carried captive, yet it returned after seventy years captivity, and had rulers over

it of the seed of David; and especially to the Messiah has God given the throne of his father David, of whose kingdom there will be no end, (Luke 1:32,33), and Jarchi's note on the text is, "for in the days of the Messiah the kingdom shall return to it," the seed of David; and Abarbinel says, of a truth, at the coming of our Messiah, this prophecy will be fulfilled; but the true Messiah is come already, in whom it is fulfilled; see Kimchi and Abendana, who refer to (Ezekiel 37:19,24).

Ver. 40 . Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam , etc.] Which is another instance of his folly, to seek to detest the counsel of God, when he himself was assured by the Lord the kingdom should be rent, and given to his servant, (1 Kings 11:11) and especially if he was informed of what passed between Ahijah and Jeroboam, as it should seem by this he was; either through Ahijah's making no secret of it, or through Jeroboam not being able to keep his own counsel, or through the report of the servants what they saw done, (1 Kings 11:29), which Solomon would easily understand: and Jeroboam arose and fled into Egypt ; the common sanctuary of persons in distress in those days: unto Shishak king of Egypt ; either the father in law or the brother in law of Solomon, or one of another family, on whom the kingdom devolved; and who might not have any good respect for Solomon, and therefore Jeroboam thought himself safe with him: this is the only king of Egypt, in Scripture, that is called by his own name, and not Pharaoh; he is generally supposed to be the same with the Sesostris of Herodotus f295 , and the Vexoris or Vexosis of Justin f296 ; and the rather he may be meant, since, according to Herodotus f297 , he was the only king of Egypt that ruled over the Ethiopians: and Strabo says he was the first that subdued Ethiopia and the country of the Troglodytes; also Diodorus Siculus affirms f299 , that he fought with the Ethiopians dwelling to the south, and obliged them to pay tribute; out of which countries Shishak brought many with him in his expedition against Jerusalem, (2 Chronicles 12:2,3) and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon ; not daring to return till that time, and then he did.

Ver. 41 . And the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon ?] Either written by himself, as Kimchi suggests, though not in being; or by some chronologer or historiographer employed by him in writing the most memorable things that happened in his reign; or by several prophets, as in (2 Chronicles 9:29) out of which the inspired writer of this book took what he was directed to by the Lord to be transmitted to future ages.

Ver. 42 . And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem, over all Israel, was forty years .] The same says Eupolemus f300 , an Heathen writer, who makes him to live but fifty two years; which is the common tradition of the Jews, who suppose he was but twelve years of age when he began to reign; which is to be confuted from the age of his son Rehoboam, (see 1 Kings 14:21). Josephus f301 , on the other hand, makes him to live to too great an age, who says that he reigned eighty years, and lived to ninety four.

Ver. 43 . And Solomon slept with his fathers , etc.] Died as they did: and was buried in the city of David his father ; not in Bethlehem, but Zion, (1 Kings 2:10) and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead ; of whom more in the following chapter. Though nothing is said of Solomon's repentance, there is no doubt but he was a good man, repented of his sins, and was saved; as may be concluded from the commendations of him after his death, (Chronicles 11:17) from the promise of God that he made, that his mercy should not depart from him, though he chastised him, (2 Samuel 7:14,15) from his being an inspired writer, who were all holy men, (Peter 1:20), and especially from his writing the book of Ecclesiastes after his fall, which contains a full acknowledgment of all his evils, a recantation of them, and repentance for them. Abulpharagius f302 , an Arabic writer, rashly asserts that he died without repentance

CHAPTER - INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 12

This chapter relates Rehoboam's going to Shechem to be made king, and Jeroboam's return from Egypt, (1 Kings 12:1,2), the people's request to Rehoboam to be eased of their taxes, as the condition of making him king, (1 Kings 12:3,4), his answer to them, after three days, having had the advice both of the old and young men, which latter he followed, and gave in a rough answer, (1 Kings 12:5-15), upon which ten tribes revolted from him, and two abode by him, (1 Kings 12:16-20), wherefore he meditated a war against the ten tribes, but was forbid by the Lord to engage in it, (1 Kings 12:21-24) and Jeroboam, in order to establish his kingdom, and preserve the people from a revolt to the house of David, because of the temple worship at Jerusalem, devised a scheme of idolatrous worship in his own territories, (1 Kings 12:25-33).

Ver. 1 . And Rehoboam went to Shechem , etc.] After the death and internment of his father: for all Israel were come to Shechem to make

him king : as was pretended, though in reality it was to seek occasion against him, and make Jeroboam king; it is very probable they knew of the prophecy of Ahijah, and therefore would not go to Jerusalem, but to Shechem, a city in the tribe of Ephraim, of which Jeroboam was, and where he had sowed the seeds of sedition when ruler there; and this place they chose, partly because they could more freely speak what they had in their minds, and partly for the safety of Jeroboam they had sent for on this occasion; so that Rehoboam went thither not of choice, but of necessity. The Jews observe that this place was very ominous; here Dinah was ravished, Joseph was sold, Abimelech exercised tyranny, and here now the kingdom was divided.

Ver. 2 . And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was yet in Egypt, heard of it , etc.] Of the death of Solomon, and of the meeting of the Israelites at Shechem: (for he was fled from the presence of King Solomon ; (see 1 Kings 11:40) and Jeroboam dwelt in Egypt;) until the death of Solomon; some render the words, “Jeroboam, returned out of Egypt” f304 , which agrees with (Chronicles 10:2), this he did on hearing the above news, and on being sent for by some of his friends, as follows.

Ver. 3 . That they sent and called him , etc.] That is, the people of Israel, some of the principal of them, especially of the tribe of Ephraim, sent messengers to him, and gave him an invitation to come to them at Shechem; or, they had sent f305 , as Kimchi interprets it, which was the reason of his returning from Egypt, at least one of them: and Jeroboam, and all the congregation of Israel, came ; the chief men of them, the heads of the people; these, with Jeroboam at the head of them, who was come out of Egypt, came to Shechem, where Rehoboam was, and they had appointed to meet him: and spake unto Rehoboam ; one in the name of them all, perhaps Jeroboam: saying ; as follows.

Ver. 4 . Thy father made our yoke grievous , etc.] Laid heavy taxes upon them, for the finishing of his buildings, for the maintenance of his household, for keeping such a large number of horses and chariots, and for the salaries of his officers, and for the support of his magnificent court; though they had very little reason to complain, since this was for the honour and grandeur of their nation, and they enjoyed their liberty, and lived in peace, plenty, and safety all his days; and such an abundance of riches was brought unto them by him that silver was as the stones of the street; though perhaps the taxes might be increased in the latter part of

his life, for the support of his vast number of wives, and of their idolatrous worship, and for the defence of himself and kingdom against the attempts of Hadad and Rezon; but, as most interpreters observe, what they find most reason to complain of, they take no notice of, even the idolatry he had set up among them: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us lighter ; that is, ease them of their taxes, or lessen them: and we will serve thee ; acknowledge him as their king, give him homage, and yield obedience to him. Ver. 5 . And he said unto them, depart yet for three days, then come again to me , etc.] Suggesting that he would consider of their proposal and inquire into the merits of it and as things should appear to him he would give them an answer in three days time; which at first sight may seem a point of prudence in him, to take time for deliberation and counsel in this affair, but in his case and circumstance it was very imprudent; for he might easily see there was discontent among the people, and a faction forming against him, and, by taking time to himself, he gave them time to take their measures, and hasten and ripen them for a revolt; for, by giving them such an answer, they might plainly perceive he was not inclined to give them satisfaction; it would have been the most advisable in him to have promised them at once that he would make them easy: and the people departed ; to their quarters, and there remained to the third day.

Ver. 6 . And King Rehoboam consulted with the old men that stood before Solomon his father, while he yet lived , etc.] Which was very prudently done; for as these were men in years, and had been his father's counsellors, from whom, do doubt, they had learnt much wisdom, being often in cabinet council with him, they were capable of giving him the best advice: and said, how do you advise, that I may answer this people ? what answer would you advise me to give to them, and in what manner?

Ver. 7 . And they spake unto him, saying , etc.] They gave their advice as follows: if thou wilt be servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them ; condescend to them, behave in an humble manner towards them, for this day however, and gratify and oblige them; though indeed a king is but a servant to his people, and his administration of government a doing service to them; hence Antigonus f306 , a king, mild, humble, and gentle, perceiving his son to behave in a fierce and violent manner towards his subjects, said to him, my son, dost thou not know that our glorious kingdom is a servitude? and answer them, and speak good words unto them ; give them a soft answer, and speak kindly and gently to them,

and make them fair promises, and give them reason to expect that their requests will be granted: then they will be thy servants for ever ; such conduct would so win upon them, and make such an impressions upon them, that they would for ever after entertain high opinion of him, and be strongly affected and attached to him, and readily serve him.

Ver. 8 . But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him , etc.] He did not rightly relish it, nor cordially receive it; it did not suit with his haughty temper, he could not brook it, to stoop to his people; he thought it a lessening of his dignity to do anything that looked like courting their favour; and therefore determined not to take the advice given him by the old men, but to seek for other: and consulted with the men, that were grown up with him, and which stood before him ; the sons of nobles, with whom he had his education, and who were his companions from his youth upwards, and who were now officers in his court, and of his privy council, being his favourites, and those he consulted on this occasion; and though they are called young men, as they were in comparison of the old men, yet since they were contemporary with Rehoboam, who was now forty one years of age, they must be about forty, or not much under, and at an age to be wiser than they appeared to be.

Ver. 9 . And he said unto them, what counsel give ye, that we may answer this people, saying , etc.] (see Gill on “ 1 Kings 12:4”).

Ver. 10 . And the young men that were grown up with him, spake unto him, saying , etc.] Gave him the following advice: thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying ; as is said, (1 Kings 12:4) thus shall thou say unto them, my little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins ; or, “is thicker” signifying that he had more strength and power than his father had, and that he would make them know it, and they should feel the weight of it, and instead of lessening he would increase their taxes; for also hereby was intimated, that his glory, grandeur, and magnificence, was greater than his father's, especially when he first came to the kingdom, and therefore required the same taxes, or greater, to support it; and perhaps reference may be had to the difference of their age, Solomon being a child, or a very young man, when he came to the throne; whereas Rehoboam was upwards of forty years of age, and capable of judging what was fit to be done, and not to be talked to and treated after this manner, nor to receive the kingdom upon a condition of the people's prescribing.

Ver. 11 . And now, whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke , etc.] Which was putting words into his mouth, owning the charge and accusation brought against his father, as he did, (1 Kings 12:14), which was very unbecoming, if true; unless this is said according to the sense of the people: I will add to your yoke ; make it heavier, lay more taxes on them: my father hath chastised you with whips ; which was putting a lie into his mouth, and which he uttered, (1 Kings 12:14) for no instance of severity exercised on the people in general can be given during the whole reign of Solomon: but I will chastise you with scorpions ; treat them more roughly, and with greater rigour: whips may mean smaller ones, these horse whips, as in the Targum; which gave an acute pain, like the sting of scorpions, or made a wound like one. Ben Gersom says, these were rods with thorns on them, which pierced and gave much pain. Weemse thinks these are alluded to by thorns in the sides, (Numbers 33:55 Judges 2:3), for whipping with them was about the sides, and not along the back. Abarbinel calls them iron thorns, rods that had iron prongs or rowels to them, which tore the flesh extremely. Isidore says, a rod that is smooth is called a rod, but, if knotty and prickled, it is rightly called a scorpion, because it makes a wound in the body arched or crooked. Pliny ascribes the invention of this sort of scorpions to the Cretians.

Ver. 12 . So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day , etc.] Jeroboam came to him at the head of the people, being the head of the faction, and designed for their king: as the king had appointed, saying, come to me again the third day ; (see 1 Kings 12:5).

Ver. 13 . And the king answered the people roughly , etc.] In a blustering manner, gave them hard words and severe menaces, being worked up to such a spirit by his young counsellors: and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him : to give them good words and kind promises. Ver. 14 . And spake to them after the counsel of the young men , etc.] And in the very language in which they gave it: saying, my father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke; my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions , (see Gill on “ 1 Kings 12:11”).

Ver. 15 . Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people , etc.] To lessen their taxes, and ease them of their burdens, as they desired: for the cause was from the Lord ; it was according to his will and appointment;

the defection of the people was willed by the Lord, and various things in Providence turned up to alienate their minds from Rehoboam, and dispose them to a revolt from him in favour of Jeroboam; and the Lord suffered the counsellors of Rehoboam to give him the advice they did, and gave him up to the folly of his own heart to take it: that he might perform his saying, which the Lord spake to Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat ; (see 1 Kings 11:29-39).

Ver. 16 . So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them , etc.] To grant their requests: the people answered the king, saying, what portion have we in David ? or in his posterity, which are not of our tribes, nor are we obliged to have a king of that family; nor can we expect any benefit or advantage from thence, as may be easily concluded from the rough answer of Rehoboam: neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse ; so they called David by way of contempt; which was great ingratitude, when he had done such great things for them, and he and his son Solomon had raised them to the pitch of wealth and glory they now enjoyed; these were seditious expressions, and seem to be borrowed from a seditious person in the times of David, (2 Samuel 20:1) to your tents, O Israel ; signifying it was high time to depart from Rehoboam, and to have nothing to say to him, or do with him, but retire to their habitations, to consider whom to set as king over them: now see to thine own house, David ; thou son or grandson of David; not his own house and family, and mind his domestic affairs, nor the house of the sanctuary in his tribe, as many of the Jewish writers interpret it; but rather the tribe of Judah, of which he was, and would have him consider to what a narrow compass his kingdom would be brought, who was just now blustering and boasting of his grandeur as a king: so Israel departed unto their tents ; to their cities, as the Targum, and their habitations there, without recognizing Rehoboam as their king, or swearing allegiance, or giving homage to him as such.

Ver. 17 . But as for the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah , etc.] Either such Israelites of the ten tribes that had before dwelt, or now upon this removed, for the sake of worship, to dwell in the tribe of Judah; or else that part of Israel, the tribe of Judah, which dwelt in the cities belonging to it: Rehoboam reigned over them ; they owned him to be their king, and submitted to his government.

Ver. 18 . Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the tribute , etc.] There was one of this name in this office in the time of David, (

Samuel 20:24), this is the same with Adoniram, as Jarchi thinks, (see Kings 4:6), him he sent either to collect the tribute of the Ephraimites, to show his authority; or rather to call the people back to have some further discourse with them, and endeavour to soften things, and bring them to a compliance, so Josephus f311 ; but it was too late, and he employed a very improper person; the heavy taxes were their complaint, and a tax gatherer, and especially one that was at the head of the tribute, must be of all men the most disagreeable to them; this is another instance of the folly and false steps of Rehoboam: and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died ; the populace fell upon him at once, and stoned him to death; and which, though contrary to law and justice, was approved of and applauded by their principal men and all the people; so irritated and provoked were they by Rehoboam's answer to them. Hottinger says, this man was buried in Shechem, which is very probable; but it is not expressed here, as he suggests it is; however, a grave stone, found A. D. 1480, in Spain, with this inscription, is not genuine, "this is the grave of Adoniram, a servant of King Solomon, who came to collect tribute, and died such a day:" therefore King Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem ; from Shechem, fearing they would treat him in the same manner in their rage and fury; his courage was now cooled, and his haughty and hectoring spirit was now brought down, and he was glad to make use of his chariot for flight; this is the first time we read of a king of Israel riding in a chariot; though before of Sisera, a Canaanitish captain, and that only in a chariot of war.

Ver. 19 . So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day .] In which the writer of this book lived, and so continued until their captivity by the king of Assyria. Their revolt is called a rebellion; for though it was according to the purpose and will of God, yet the people had no command or order from God for it, and was done without consulting him, and was a rejection of their lawful prince.

Ver. 20 . And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again , etc.] Out of Egypt; the chief men knew of it before, for he had headed them in their approach and address to Rehoboam; but the people in common had not, and especially those of the various tribes besides that of Ephraim: that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel ; they sent for him from his tent or house, which probably was in Shechem, and gave him an invitation to come to their assembly, met together to deliberate about a king; when they

unanimously chose him to be king over Israel, that is, over the ten tribes, and inaugurated him into his office: there was none that followed the house of David but the tribe of Judah only ; in which Benjamin was included, as appears from the following verse; that being joined to it, and mixed with it, and both having a part in Jerusalem, and so ever after the kingdom was denominated the kingdom of Judah.

Ver. 21 . And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem , &c.] From Shechem, which was forty miles from Jerusalem: he assembled all the house of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin, an hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam the son of Solomon ; which not only shows courage reassumed by Rehoboam, now safely home, but the hearty attachment of Judah and Benjamin to him, who raised presently so numerous an army in his favour; and had it not been that the Lord was against their going to battle with Israel, in all probability they might have gained their point, Jeroboam being scarcely settled in his kingdom, and having no forces raised.

Ver. 22 . But the word of God came unto Shemaiah the man of God , etc.] A prophet in those days, (see 2 Chronicles 12:15) and the word that came to him, as in the Targum, is called the word of prophecy: saying ; as follows.

Ver. 23 . Speak unto Rehoboam the son of Solomon king of Judah , etc.] He is called king before, but of what tribe or tribes is not expressly said, only it is implied in (1 Kings 12:17) and he is only acknowledged king of Judah by the Lord himself: and unto all the house of Judah and Benjamin ; which made but one house, as before but one tribe, (1 Kings 11:36) and to the remnant of the people ; of the other tribes that might dwell among them at Jerusalem, and especially Simeon, whose inheritance was within the tribe of Judah, (Joshua 19:1) saying : as follows.

Ver. 24 . Thus saith the Lord , etc.] A common preface the prophets used when they spoke in the name of the Lord: ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel ; and that because they were their brethren; though that is not the only reason, another follows: return every man to his house, for this thing is from me ; it was according to the will of God, as Josephus rightly says f314 ; it was by his ordination and appointment, though Jeroboam and the people sinned in the way

and manner in which they brought it about; and therefore to fight against Israel, in order to regain the kingdom, would be fighting against God, and so to no purpose: they hearkened therefore to the word of the Lord, and returned to depart according to the word of the Lord ; they knew Shemaiah was a prophet of the Lord, and they believed the message he brought came from him, and therefore hearkened and were obedient to it; and with the consent of Rehoboam were disbanded, and returned to their habitations, being satisfied with, and submissive to, the will of God, both king and people. Ver. 25 . Then Jeroboam built Shechem in Mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein , etc.] Not that this city had lain in ruins from the times of Abimelech, (Judges 9:45) for then it would not have been a proper place for the convention of the people, (1 Kings 12:1) but he repaired the walls of it, and fortified it, and built a palace in it for his residence: and went out from thence, and built Penuel ; a place on the other side Jordan, the tower of which was beaten down by Gideon, (Judges 8:17) and might be now rebuilt, or at least the city was repaired by him, and anew fortified, perhaps for the better security of his dominions on that side Jordan; though Fortunatus Scacchus is of opinion that this was an altar, the same as at Carmel, (1 Kings 18:30), which Jeroboam built, and called by this name in testimony of the common religion of the Israelites and Jews.

Ver. 26 . And Jeroboam said in his heart , etc,] As he was musing about the state of his kingdom and the affairs of it: now shall the kingdom return to the house of David ; such were his fears, unless some method could be taken to prevent it, particularly with respect to religion, which was what his thoughts were employed about.

Ver. 27 . If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem , etc.] In the temple there, three times in the year, which all the males were obliged to, besides other times, when they had occasion to offer sacrifice, which they might do nowhere else: then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their Lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah ; being drawn by the magnificence of the temple, the beauty and order of worship in it, the holiness of the place, and the grandeur of the royal court, and the persuasions of the priests and prophets of the Lord, both to keep to the service of the Lord, and to obey their lawful sovereign; and besides, they might be in fear they should be taken up and punished as traitors, and therefore would choose to submit to Rehoboam, that they might have the liberty of sacrificing without fear; Jeroboam seems conscious himself that Rehoboam was their liege lord and lawful king: and they shall kill me, and

go again to Rehoboam king of Judah ; his fears ran so high, that he should not only lose his kingdom, but his life, unless some step was taken to make an alteration in religious worship. Ver. 28 . Whereupon the king took counsel , etc.] Of some of his principal men, that had as little religion as himself, and were only concerned for the civil state; and the result of their consultation was as follows: and made two calves of gold ; in imitation of that which was made by Aaron, and encouraged by his example and success; and having been in Egypt some time, he might have learned the calf or ox worship there, and might take his pattern from thence, and have two as they had; the one they called Apis, which was worshipped at Memphis, and another called Mnevis, worshipped at Hierapolis, as many learned men have observed; these were she calves, according to the Septuagint and Josephus f316 : and said unto them ; not his counsellors, but the people of the land: it is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem ; pretending he sought their ease, by contriving a method to prevent their long fatiguing journeys, to go up with their sacrifices, firstfruits, etc. and the Jews say the firstfruits ceased from going up to Jerusalem on the twenty third of Sivan, which answers to part of May and part of June, on which day they kept a fast on that account: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt; using the same words Aaron did on a like occasion; not that he thought these were really gods, and had divinity in them; nor could he hope or expect that the people would believe they had; but that these were representations of the true God, who had brought them out of Egypt; and that it might as well be supposed that God would cause his Shechinah to dwell in them as between the cherubim over the ark.

Ver. 29 . And he set the one in Bethel , etc.] In the southern part of the land, on the border of Ephraim and Benjamin; and the rather he chose this place, because its name signifies the house of God, and had been a sacred place, where Jacob more than once enjoyed the divine Presence: and the other put he in Dan : in the northern part of the land, for the convenience of the inhabitants of those parts; and the rather, since it had been a place resorted to in former times, because of the teraphim of Micah there.

Ver. 30 . And this thing became a sin , etc.] The cause and occasion of the sin of idolatry; it led them by degrees to leave off the worship of God, and to worship these calves as gods: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan ; which was the furthest off, such was their great zeal for idolatrous worship; or they went thither before that at Bethel was

set up; and even they at Bethel would go as far as Dan to worship, such was their veneration for both the calves. Abarbinel is of opinion that these calves were not made by Jeroboam for idolatrous uses, only the altar later mentioned; and that he never worshipped before them, nor sacrificed to them, nor even built the altar before them; but that these were set up as signs, and in memory of his kingdom, like the pillars in Solomon's temple; that he chose the calf or ox as emblems of his family, the family of Joseph, (Deuteronomy 33:17) two to represent Ephraim and Manasseh; golden ones, to denote the majesty and perpetuity of his kingdom; and he set these, the one at Bethel, at the entrance of it, and the other at Dan, at the further borders of it; and that he did not call those gods, but the only true God, as he that brought Israel out of Egypt; only signified by that expression, that he was everywhere, there as well as at Jerusalem; but that the Israelites, who were taken with sensible objects, on visiting these out of curiosity, it became a snare to them, and they fell into the worship of them; just as Gideon's ephod, and Moses' brasen serpent, were unto them.

Ver. 31 . And he made an house of high places , etc.] Or “altars” f318 , built a temple at Dan, and set up several altars in it for sacrifice, both for burnt offerings, and for incense, as at Jerusalem: and made priests of the lowest of the people ; this clause seems not so well rendered; for this would have been very unpopular, and brought his new form of worship into contempt, to make the dregs of the people priests, which was not only a very sacred office, but of great honour; it was usual in some nations for kings to be priests also f319 , and Jeroboam himself exercised this office, (1 Kings 12:33 13:1) and therefore would never put the meanest of the people into it, but rather those of higher rank: the words may be literally rendered, “from the extremities” or “ends of the people” f320 ; meaning not merely from the extremist parts of his country, but rather out of the whole of the people; out of all sorts of them, out of any of them, without any distinction of tribe: for so it follows, which were not of the sons of Levi ; and as by this means he enriched himself, by taking the cities that belonged to the priests and Levites, which they were obliged to leave, and from whence he drove them, (Chronicles 11:14) so he pleased the people by laying open the priesthood common to them, and freeing them from the payment of tithes, and the like.

Ver. 32 . And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah , etc.] The feast of tabernacles, which was on the fifteenth day of the seventh month;

this was done chiefly for the sake of an alteration; though Abarbinel thinks, because the fruits of the land were not so soon ripe nor so soon gathered, in the northern parts of the land, as nearer Jerusalem, he judged this month the fittest for the feast of ingathering the fruits; and he might hope to get more people to come to his feast, when all were gathered in: and he offered upon the altar (so he did in Bethel), sacrificing unto the calves that he had made : this he did by his priests, or rather he himself did it, (see 1 Kings 13:4), this shows that Jeroboam made these calves for worship, and did sacrifice to them, at least as representations of God.

Abarbinel, to make this agree with his hypothesis, gives this sense of the clause, that he did not sacrifice to the calves, but to God, because of them, that his kingdom, which they were a sign of, might be continued; and there being but one calf in a place, he could not be said to sacrifice to them both, but to God, because of both; or else he thinks this must be done after the people had turned aside to them, and not when Jeroboam made them. The clause in the parenthesis, “so he did in Bethel”, intimates that he did the same in Bethel as in Dan, of which what is said before is spoken; that is, that he made an house of high places in Bethel also, made priests out of all the people, such as were not of the tribe of Levi, appointed the feast of the fifteenth day of the eighth month to be observed there also, and he himself offered on the altar there: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made : to officiate there.

Ver. 33 . So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the fifteenth day of the eighth month , etc.] As he had done in Dan: even in the month which he had devised of his own heart ; the feast of tabernacles was of God’s appointing, but the time of keeping he had devised himself, changing it from the seventh month, or Tisri, which answers to our September and October, to the eighth month, or Marchesvan, which answers to part of October and part of November: and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel ; to be observed by them as the feast of tabernacles was by the priests of Judah and Benjamin: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense ; which none but the priests should do; perhaps the reason why the same resentment was not shown as to Uzziah was, because this was not at the altar of the Lord: whether he burnt incense after the manner of the Jewish priests, or as the priests of Egypt did to the sun, where he had been for some time, is not certain; the former burnt incense only twice a day, morning and evening, the latter three times; at sunrising they burnt rosin, about noon myrrh, and about sun setting “kuphi”, which

was a compound of sixteen sorts f321 .

CHAPTER - INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 13

In this chapter is an account of a man of God being sent to exclaim against Jeroboam's altar, and threaten its destruction, of which he gave a sign, which was accomplished, and with it the withering of the king's hand, which was healed upon the prophet's prayer for him, (1 Kings 13:1-7), who would have entertained him at his house, but he refused the offer, and departed, (1 Kings 13:8-10), but an old prophet in Bethel hearing of him, rode after him, and fetched him back to eat bread with him, through a lie he told him, (1 Kings 13:11-19) upon which the word came to the old prophet, threatening the man of God with death for disobeying his command, and which was accordingly executed by a lion that met him in the way, and slew him, (1 Kings 13:20-24), of which the old prophet being informed, went and took up his carcass, and buried it in his own sepulchre, where he charged his sons to bury him also when dead, believing that all the man of God had said would be fulfilled, (1 Kings 13:25-30) and the chapter is closed with observing the continuance of Jeroboam in his idolatry, (1 Kings 13:33 34).

Ver. 1 . And, behold, there came a man of God out of Judah , etc.] Whom Josephus calls Jadon, perhaps the same with Iddo, who is by the Jewish writers generally thought to be this man of God, and which may seem to be countenanced by (2 Chronicles 9:29) but cannot be, because this man was quickly slain, whereas Iddo lived after Rehoboam, and wrote his acts, first and last, nay, after Ahijah his son, (2 Chronicles 13:22) and for the same reason Shemaiah cannot be the man of God, (1 Kings 12:22), though Tertullian calls him Sameas, and designs Shemaiah: but, whoever he was, he came by the word of the Lord to Bethel : that is, by his command: and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense ; at the time he came, (1 Kings 12:33).

Ver. 2 . And he cried against the altar in the word of the Lord , etc.] By his order and command: and said, O altar, altar ; addressing himself not to Jeroboam, but the altar, thereby reproving his stupidity, the altar being as ready to hear as he; and because that was what moved the indignation of the Lord; and the word is repeated, to show the vehemency of the prophet's spirit, and his zeal against it; though the Jews commonly say it respects both altars, that at Dan, as well as this at Bethel: thus saith the Lord, a

child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name ; who was not born until three hundred years after this, according to the Jewish writers f325 : but it is generally reckoned to be more, even three hundred and fifty or three hundred and sixty years; this is a clear proof of the prescience, predetermination, and providence of God with respect to future events, contingent ones, such as depend upon the will of men; for what more so than giving a name to a child? upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee ; all which was fulfilled by Josiah, (2 Kings 23:15,16,20), it may be read, "the bones of a man", which the Jews understand of Jeroboam; but may only signify that, instead of the bones of beasts, which were burnt on it, the bones of men should be burnt, and even of the priests themselves; a glaring proof this of the truth of prophecy, and of divine revelation.

Ver. 3 . And he gave a sign the same day, saying, this is the sign which the Lord hath spoken , etc.] As a confirmation of the truth of what the prophet had said, and for the proof of his being a true prophet of the Lord: behold, the altar shall be rent ; of itself, by an invisible hand, by the power of God: and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out ; signifying it should be entirely demolished, not only shaken but destroyed, so as not to be capable of retaining the ashes on it; this was an emblem of the utter abolition of idolatry here in future times.

Ver. 4 . And it came to pass, when King Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, who had cried against the altar in Bethel , etc.] He was highly provoked: so that he put forth his hand from the altar; on which he was burning incense: saying, lay hold on him ; he put forth his hand, and either shook it at the prophet, threatening what he would do to him; or as beckoning to the people to seize him, and which he also expressed: and his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him ; he could not move it one way nor another, but it remained in the same position, the nerves and muscles being shrunk; which was a further confirmation of the prophet's mission from God, being one of those concerning whom he says, "do my prophets no harm", and a fresh token of the certain performance of what he had said.

Ver. 5 . The altar also was rent , etc.] Split into two parts perhaps, and one fell one way, and the other another; and the ashes poured out from the altar ; the ashes of the burnt offering, these were spilled on the ground; all which was done without any outward force, or any visible means thereof:

according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the Lord ; by his direction and order.

Ver. 6 . And the king answered and said unto the man of God , etc.] In another tone than when he bid the people lay hold on him; not in a haughty, but humble manner; not as threatening, but supplicating: entreat now the face of the Lord thy God ; he does not say “my God”, for he had apostatized from him, and served other gods, but “thy” God, whose prophet he was, and who had an interest in him, as clearly appeared by what he had said and done by him; and pray for me, that my hand may be restored me again ; not that the anger of God might be turned away from him, and he enjoy the divine favour, and have an application of pardoning grace made to him, only to have this outward mercy, this temporal favour restored to him, the use of his hand: and the man of God besought the Lord ; not rendering evil for evil; but being of a forgiving spirit, though the king had stretched out his hand against him, he lifted up his hands to heaven for him: and the king’s hand was restored again, and became as it was before ; which was another instance of divine power, and a further proof of the prophet’s divine mission; from whence it might be concluded, that what he had prophesied of would be fulfilled, and was an instance also of divine goodness to the king, which should have led him to repentance, but did not.

Ver. 7 . And the king said unto the man of God, come home with me, and refresh thyself , etc.] By eating a meal with him, after such a journey he had taken, and delivered his prophecies, and put up his prayers for the king: and I will give thee a reward ; for his prayers, by means of which his hand was restored to him; but takes no notice of the Lord, the author of this miraculous cure, nor expresses the least degree of thankfulness and gratitude to him.

Ver. 8 . And the man of God said unto the king , etc.] In answer to his civility to him, to assure him it was not out of contempt to him, or ill will to him, or slight of his favour, but in obedience to the will of God: if thou wilt give half of thine house ; of the riches in it, and even of his kingdom: I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place ; this idolatrous place; the reason follows.

Ver. 9 . For so it was charged me by the word of the Lord , etc.] The command of the Lord, by which he came to Bethel, and cried against the

altar there, (1 Kings 13:1,2) saying, eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest : signifying that no communion was to be had with idolaters, nor any example to be set and followed; but the way to them, and to their idolatry, was to be shunned and avoided.

Ver. 10 . So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Bethel .] Neither ate nor drank with the king, though that is not expressed; nor did he go back the same way he came; but in each particular observed the divine command, and was obedient to it.

Ver. 11 . Now there dwelt an old prophet in Bethel , etc.] The Targum is, a false prophet, so Josephus f326 ; it is hard to say what he was, a good man or a bad man; if a good man, he was guilty of many things which are not in his favour, as dwelling in such an idolatrous place suffering his sons to attend idolatrous worship, and telling the man of God a premeditated lie; and yet there are several things which seem contrary to his being a bad man, and of an ill character, since he is called an old prophet, did not attend idolatrous worship, showed great respect to the man of God, had the word of God sent unto him concerning him, believed that what he had prophesied should come to pass, buried the man of God in his own grave, and desired his sons to bury him with him. In some copies his name is said to be Micah, as Kimchi observes, and other Jewish writers say the same; though some take him to be Amaziah the priest of Bethel, and others Gersom the son of Moses f328 , but without any foundation; though he now dwelt at Bethel, he was originally of Samaria, (2 Kings 23:18), and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel ; that the altar was rent, and the ashes poured out, as he had said, and that Jeroboam's hand withered, and was restored upon his prayer to God: the words which he had spoken unto the king ; that one should be born of the family of David, Josiah by name, that should offer the idolatrous priests, and burn the bones of men upon that altar, and that that should be rent, and its ashes poured forth, which was done: then they told also their father ; gave him a particular account of his actions and words.

Ver. 12 . And their father said unto them, what way went he ? etc.] Having a strong inclination to see him, and converse with him: for his sons had seen what way the man of God went which came from Judah ; they took notice of it; and, as the Targum, they showed it to their father.

Ver. 13 . And he said unto his sons, saddle me the ass , etc.] Which he

used to ride on; intimating he had a mind to ride after him, and overtake him, as he might reasonably think he might, since the man of God was on foot: so they saddled him the ass, and he rode thereon ; after the man of God, taking the way his sons directed.

Ver. 14 . And went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak , etc.] To shelter him from the heat, and being faint, hungry, and thirsty; so the ancients of old made use of oaks for a covering, before houses were invented f329 ; thus Abraham pitched his tent in the plain, or under the oak, of Mamre, (Genesis 13:18) and he said unto him, art thou the man of God that camest from Judah ? which he might guess at from his habit, and from the description his sons had given of him: and he said, I am ; owned himself to be the person he inquired after.

Ver. 15 . Then said he unto him, come home with me, and eat bread .] In which invitation no doubt he was hearty, and might have no ill design in it, only to have some conversation with him, as being a good man, and a prophet of the Lord, especially upon the subject of his prophecies at Bethel.

Ver. 16 . And he said, I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee , etc.] Into the city, and into his house in it, being such an idolatrous place, and especially being forbidden of God: neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place ; he was resolute and determined to abide by the commandment of the Lord, though there is reason to believe that he was now both hungry and thirsty.

Ver. 17 . For it was said to me by the word of the Lord , etc.] By the angel that was sent to him, who gave him his message and instructions; which he was persuaded came from the Lord himself, and therefore looked upon himself under obligation to regard them as such: thou shall eat no bread , etc. the same that he observed to the king, (Kings 13:9).

Ver. 18 . And he said unto him , etc.] That is, the old prophet said to the man of God: I am a prophet also as thou art ; meaning, that he was a prophet of the true God, and not of any idol deity; that he not only believed in him, and was a worshipper of him, but had revelations from him, and of the same things this man of God had, and that he believed that what he had prophesied of would certainly come to pass: and an angel spoke unto me by the word of the Lord ; was sent and dispatched by the order of the Lord with the following message: saying, bring him back with

thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water ; and so be refreshed, and be fit to proceed on in his journey: [but] he lied unto him ; no messenger nor message being sent to him by the Lord, but was wholly a device and stratagem of his own to persuade the man of God to return with him, that he might have his company and conversation.

Ver. 19 . So he went back with him , etc.] In which he sinned; for as he had most certainly the command of God not to eat and drink in that place, he ought to have had the countermand from the Lord, and not trusted to another person. There are some things indeed which may be said in his favour, and be an apology for him, as that this man was an ancient prophet of the Lord, as he appeared to him; and that though he was forbid to eat and drink with idolaters, yet he thought he might with a prophet of the Lord, and especially as he affirmed he had the direction of an angel of the Lord for it; nor could he conceive that the prophet had any interest to serve by it, but rather it might be chargeable and burdensome to him; and he might think the Lord, out of compassion on him, had countermanded his former orders, and the circumstances he was in might the more incline him to listen to these plausible pretences; but, after all, he ought to have taken no directions but from the Lord himself; in this he failed: and did eat bread in his house, and drink water ; contrary to the express command of God.

Ver. 20 . And it came to pass, as they sat at the table , etc.] The old prophet, with his sons, and the man of God; the Arabic version adds, “and did eat”, there being a pause in the Hebrew text, as if something was wanting, and to be understood and supplied: that the word of the Lord came unto the prophet that brought him back ; that is, to the old prophet, who was the means of bringing back the man of God; the word did not come to him who had transgressed the command of the Lord, but to him who was the occasion of it; though Abarbinel is of opinion that the word came to the latter, and so some versions, both ancient and modern, render the clause, “to the prophet whom he had brought back” and which is countenanced by what is said, (1 Kings 13:26), according to the word of the Lord which he spoke unto him : but the former sense best agrees with what follows.

Ver. 21 . And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah , etc.] His mind being greatly affected with the word brought to him, partly on his own account, who, by a lie his conscience must accuse him of, had

been the means of seducing the man of God, and partly on his account, who was threatened with death for complying with him: saying, thus saith the Lord ; being obliged to deliver, in the name of the Lord, what was said unto him: forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord ; the order that came out of his mouth, as follows: and hast not kept the commandment which the Lord thy God commanded thee ; not to eat nor drink in Bethel.

Ver. 22 . But camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which the Lord did say to thee, eat no bread, nor drink no water , etc.] Which command he observed when first there, though invited by the king; and yet, after he had got out of the place, was prevailed upon to return and transgress the command: thy carcass shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers ; signifying that he should die before he came to the land of Judah, and he should be buried in another place, and which was verified.

Ver. 23 . And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk , etc.] That is, had finished the meal; for he had begun to eat and drink before the word came, which came while they were eating and drinking; and it seems this did not hinder their proceeding to make an end of their meal, which one would have thought would have spoiled their appetite: that he saddled for him the ass, [to wit], for the prophet whom he had brought back ; he ordered his sons to get it ready for him, that he might not walk on foot as he had; though it does not appear that either he or any of his servants accompanied him, but the contrary.

Ver. 24 . And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him , etc.] Perhaps not far from Bethel; and this lion might come out of the same wood the she bears did, that devoured the children that mocked the prophet, as Bishop Patrick conjectures, (2 Kings 2:23,24) and his carcass was cast in the way ; in the high road, where it seems the lion seized him, and he fell: and the ass stood by it ; disregarded and unhurt by the lion, though the prophet was pulled off of the back of him: the lion also stood by the carcass : not offering to tear it in pieces and devour it, but rather, as if he was the guard of it, to keep off all others from meddling with it; these circumstances are very surprising, and show the thing to be of God; for when the lion had done what he had a commission to do, which was to kill the prophet, he was to do no more.

Ver. 25 . And, behold, men passed by , etc.] Travellers on the road; nor did the lion offer to seize on them, nor desert the carcass upon their approach: and saw the carcass cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcass ; as before described: and they came and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt ; which was Bethel, by which means he came to have knowledge of it.

Ver. 26 . And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard thereof , etc.] The old prophet, that had deceived him, by telling him a lie: he said, it is the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the Lord ; but not a syllable does he say of his own sin in deceiving him; though one would think his own conscience must smite him for it: therefore the Lord hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath torn him, and slain him, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake unto him ; and that by himself, (1 Kings 13:21,22).

Ver. 27 . And he spoke to his sons, saying, saddle me the ass , etc.] For it seems he had more than one, for he had sent away the man of God with one before: and they saddled him; the ass he commonly rode on.

Ver. 28 . And he went and found his carcass cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by the carcass , etc.] As before described: the lion had not eaten the carcass, nor torn the ass ; both which were very marvellous; as also that the ass should stand so quietly, and without fear, by the carcass along with the lion and not run away; but here both stayed till the prophet came to take care of the carcass, which shows the singular providence of God in this affair; and that though he chastised the man of God with a temporal judgment for his offence, yet he was dear to him, and even his carcass precious in his sight. Ver. 29 . And the prophet took up the carcass of the man of God , etc.] The lion perhaps made off as soon as he came, or, if he stayed, the prophet was not afraid of him, seeing he did not attempt to devour the carcass, nor touch the ass, nor do any hurt to those that passed by: and laid it upon the ass, and brought it back ; to his own city: and the old prophet came to the city to mourn, and to bury him ; to perform the funeral rites, according to the custom of the place.

Ver. 30 . And he laid his carcass in his own grave , etc.] Which he had prepared for himself; for, as he came from Samaria, it could not be the sepulchre of his fathers; and this was showing all the respect, and doing all the honour to him, he well could: and they mourned over him ; the

prophet and his sons: saying, alas, my brother ; which was an usual form of lamentation at funerals in later times, (see Jeremiah 22:18).

Ver. 31 . And it came to pass, after he had buried him, that he spoke to his sons, saying , etc.] He gave them the following charge: when I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre wherein the man of God is buried ; as it was his own, it might be reasonably thought they would bury him in it without such a charge; but, lest they should not, he gives it: lay my bones beside his bones ; his view in this was, that when Josiah came to burn the bones of the priests, he would spare the bones of this man of God; and so his, lying by them, and mingled with them, would be spared also, and so it proved, (2 Kings 23:18).

Ver. 32 . For the saying which he cried by the word of the Lord against the altar in Bethel , etc.] That the priests should be offered on it, and men's bones be burnt upon it; for as for its being rent, and the ashes of it poured out, that had been done already: and against all the houses of the high places which are in Samaria, shall surely come to pass : by which it appears that there were temples, and high places, and altars built in other parts of the kingdom besides Dan and Bethel, of the destruction of which the man of God prophesied, though not before mentioned; all which the old prophet gave credit to, and firmly believed would be accomplished. The kingdom of Israel, in later times, had the name of Samaria, from the chief city of it, (Isaiah 7:9), here spoken of by anticipation, for as yet it was not in being, (see 1 Kings 16:24) and either it has its name here by way of prophecy, or else given by the writer of this book, as what it went by in his time.

Ver. 33 . After this thing Jeroboam returned not from his evil way , etc.] From the idolatrous practices he had started, and was establishing; though he had seen his altar rent, and the ashes poured out as the man of God predicted, his own hand withered, and that restored again upon the prayer of the prophet; and though he had heard of the death he died for his disobedience to the command of God, and the several marvellous things that attended it; these were so far from reforming him, that he seemed to be the more hardened thereby: but made again of the lowest of the people priests of the high places : and officiated there, and indeed those of the tribe of Levi would not serve there, and therefore were expelled their cities; (see 2 Chronicles 11:14).

Ver. 34 . And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam , etc.] All the above things were sins in themselves, as building high places, and putting priests in them, whoever would; but the sense is, that these were the causes of punishment, or of evil things being inflicted on Jeroboam's family; sin is put for the punishment of sin, as it often is: even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth ; so that it become utterly extinct; and the next thing we hear of is the sickness and death of his son.

CHAPTER - INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 14

This chapter relates the sickness of Jeroboam's son, the application of his wife, at his instance, to the prophet Ahijah, in the child's favour, (<111401> Kings 14:1-6), the prophecy of the prophet concerning the ruin of Jeroboam's house, and the death of the child, which came to pass, (Kings 14:7-18), an account of the years of Jeroboam's reign, and also of Rehoboam's, (1 Kings 14:19-21), and of the evil things done and suffered by the latter in his kingdom, and the calamities that came upon him for it, (1 Kings 14:22-28) and the conclusion of his reign, (1 Kings 14:29-31).

Ver. 1 . At that time Abijah, the son of Jeroboam, fell sick .] Being smitten of God with some disease, as a punishment of Jeroboam's sin; how long this was after the above things were done cannot be said.

Ver. 2 . And Jeroboam said to his wife , etc.] Who she was is not known: arise, I pray thee, and disguise thyself ; put off her royal apparel, and clothe herself like a common person, mimic the dress and language of a country woman: that thou be not known to be the wife of Jeroboam : by any that should see her on the road, or at the city she was to go to, or by the prophet to whom she would be sent: and get thee to Shiloh ; which, according to Bunting f331 , was twenty four miles, from Tirzah, where Jeroboam now lived, (see 1 Kings 14:17) behold, there is Ahijah the prophet : called from thence the Shilonite, (Kings 11:29), which told me that I should be king over this people : and this coming to pass, proved him to be a true prophet, and to be credited in what he should say concerning their child. Jeroboam desired his wife to go on this errand, because he did not care it should be known that he applied to any of the prophets of the Lord; nor did he choose it should be known whose child was inquired about, which another must have told, whereas his wife could speak of it as her own; and she was the fittest person to give an account of the child's illness, and would ask the

most proper and pertinent questions, and bring him back a faithful report; and he would have her be disguised, lest the prophet, who bore no good will to him because of his apostasy, should refuse to give any answer at all, or else give a very rough and disagreeable one.

Ver. 3 . And take with thee ten loaves, and cracknels, and a cruse of honey, and go to him , etc.] It being usual to carry a present to a prophet when he was inquired of on any account, (see 1 Samuel 9:7) and this being a plain present, and of such things as the country afforded, she might be taken for a plain countrywoman, and not for such a personage as she was: the ten loaves could not be large for a woman to carry, most probably made of wheat; the cracknels, according to the Greek version in Drusius, were for the prophet's children; they very likely were spiced, or were sweetened with honey, and might be somewhat like our simnels; they seem to have their name in Hebrew from having points and pricks in them for the sake of ornament; such as Plautus calls "*scribilitae*", because as Turnebus says, they were marked and pricked, and seemed as if they were written: he shall tell thee what shall become of the child ; whether it should live or die, for that was all he wanted to know; he did not desire to know what should be done to the child for its recovery, nor to request the prophet's prayers for it.

Ver. 4 . And Jeroboam's wife did so, and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Abijah , etc.] Disguised herself, and took this long journey, and found the prophet's house; which she did partly in obedience to her husband, and partly from affection to her child: but Abijah could not see; her or anybody else that came into the room to him: for his eyes were set by reason of his age ; or "stood" fixed and immovable, as the eyes of blind men are; or the nerves and muscles of his eyes stood within the holes thereof, so that he could not see objects.

Ver. 5 . And the Lord said unto Abijah , etc.] Either in a dream, or by an impulse upon his mind, before Jeroboam's wife came in: behold, the wife of Jeroboam cometh to ask a thing of thee for her son, for he is sick ; to know whether he will recover or not: thus and thus shall thou say unto her ; as after expressed in some following verses: for it shall be, when she cometh in, that she shall feign herself another woman ; to the people that let her in, and introduce her to the prophet, and to the prophet himself; pretend herself to be a countrywoman come to ask a question of the prophet concerning her son that was ill of a disease.

Ver. 6 . And it was so, when Ahijah heard the sound of her feet, as she came in at the door , etc.] Of the room where the prophet was: that he said, come in, thou wife of Jeroboam, why feignest thou thyself to be another ? which must greatly surprise and confound her, as well as lay open to her the folly of her and her husband to imagine that she could be secreted from God, and a prophet of his; or that a prophet could tell her what was future, and yet not know her that was present; and this might serve to assure her, and so her husband, that what the prophet after delivered would certainly come to pass: for I am sent to thee with heavy tidings ; or hard things, such as would be very disagreeable to her and her husband.

Ver. 7 . Go tell Jeroboam , etc.] Thy husband: thus saith the Lord God of Israel ; so he continued to be, though they had revolted from him: forasmuch as I exalted thee from among the people ; the common people, from a low estate in which he was: and made thee prince over my people Israel ; so they were when he made them king over them; and there were some among them still that loved the Lord, served and feared him, of which the prophet himself, now speaking, was an instance.

Ver. 8 . And rent the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it thee , etc.] Even ten parts out of twelve: and yet thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes ; who never was guilty of idolatry, but always constantly and cordially attended the pure worship of God, and was careful to do everything in that according to the will of God, whatever else he might be deficient in.

Ver. 9 . But hast done evil above all that were before thee , etc.] Not only above David, but above Saul, who never gave into idolatry, yea, even above Solomon, who, though he connived at idolatry, and might be guilty of it in some instances, yet did not attempt to draw his people into it; and if this was the latter end of Jeroboam's reign, which is probable, Rehoboam and Abijam might be both dead; and though they were blameworthy in some things, yet not so bad as Jeroboam; though perhaps this may respect only such who had been kings of Israel before him: for thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger ; the two calves of gold; for however he might colour things over, and pretend he did not look upon these as gods, but as representations of God, and that he did not worship them, but God by them, yet the Lord considered it as idolatry, than which nothing is more provoking to him: and hast cast me behind thy

back ; as unworthy of his regard; or my worship, as the Targum, which he neglected, and showed no concern for.

Ver. 10 . Therefore, behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam , etc.] Calamities, destruction, and ruin: and will cut off from Jeroboam him that pisseth against the wall ; not leave a dog of his, or rather a male, (see 1 Samuel 25:22) and him that is shut up and left in Israel ; in garrisons or in prisons, in cities or in fields, or in whatsoever situation or circumstances they may be.

Some interpret it of wealth and substance; it signifies an entire destruction it may be of men and goods, (see Deuteronomy 32:36) and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone ; signifying that Jeroboam's family was as loathsome and abominable to the Lord as dung is to men; and that he would make as clean a riddance of them as men do of dung when they sweep it out, and will not leave the least scrap behind.

Ver. 11 . Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat, and him that dieth in the fields shall the fowls of the air eat , etc.] The meaning is, that they should have no burial: for the Lord hath spoken it ; and therefore shall be fulfilled, for what he hath said he will do, (Numbers 23:19).

Ver. 12 . Arise thou therefore, get thee to thine own house , etc.] With all haste, as soon as she could: and when thy feet enter the city ; the city of Tirzah, very probably the king's palace stood at the entry of it, (see 1 Kings 14:17), the child shall die ; this is an answer to the question she was to ask, and at the same time a token of the sure and certain fulfilment of all the prophet had spoken in the name of the Lord.

Ver. 13 . And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him , etc.] Give him an honourable interment, and follow him to the grave with lamentation, because he was the heir apparent to the throne, and an hopeful prince, of whom they had raised expectations; that when he came to the throne things would take a different turn, especially in matters of religion, and they might fear, he being removed, things would grow worse instead of better: for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave ; or be buried, the rest should be devoured by dogs or fowls: because in him there is found some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel in the house of

Jeroboam ; the principles of grace were implanted, and seeds of piety and religion sown in his heart; and there appeared a disposition of mind, and desires in him to the name of God, and the remembrance of it; or to his pure worship and service; it might be discerned that he had a dislike of idolatry, and a desire to have true religion restored. The Jews say that this good thing in him was, that he was the means of removing the watch or guards that were placed in the way to hinder the Israelites from going up to the feasts of the Lord.

Ver. 14 . Moreover the Lord shall raise up a king over Israel , etc.] Baasha is meant, (1 Kings 15:29) who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam that day ; immediately, as soon as on the throne, he should destroy his whole family, as he did, (1 Kings 15:29), but what? even now ; shall it be that day? yes; even at that very time, and which will be very quickly from this time; for as it may be supposed this was said at the latter end of Jeroboam's reign, and his son and successor reigned but two years ere this prophecy was accomplished. The Targum is, "who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam, him that is living today, and shall be from henceforward."

Ver. 15 . And the Lord shall smite Israel as a reed is shaken in the water , etc.] Either by the wind or by the stream; and may signify the fluctuating and uncertain condition Israel should be in future reigns, through civil wars, and the translation of the kingdom into different families; so that there was continually disquietude and uneasiness, and no settled peace and tranquillity: and he shall root up Israel out this good land he gave to their fathers ; which was brought about, first by Tiglathpileser, and then by Shalmaneser, kings of Assyria, that carried them captives from hence: and shall scatter them beyond the river ; the river Euphrates, as the Targum: or, as others, the river Gozan, (2 Kings 17:6) because they have made their groves, provoking the Lord to anger : in which groves they placed idols, and worshipped them, which was highly provoking to the Lord, and the cause of their dispersion.

Ver. 16 . And he shall give Israel up , etc.] Into the hands of their enemies: because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin ; by his devices and stratagems, by his example and edicts, and by the methods he took to prevent Israel from worshipping in the manner and place he directed to.

Ver. 17 . And Jeroboam's wife arose, and departed , &c.] Upon this

speech of the prophet's to her: and came to Tirzah ; where Jeroboam now had his court, and where their son now was; it was a royal city in the time of the Canaanites, and is commonly placed in the tribe of Manasseh, and was a very pleasant one, as its name signifies, to which there is an allusion, (Song of Solomon 6:4), (see Gill on " Joshua 12:24"), and when she came to the threshold of the door, the child died : just as she was about to step over the threshold of the royal palace, which seems to have been at the entering of the city of Tirzah, (1 Kings 14:12). Ver. 18 . And they buried him , etc.] In an honourable manner, suitable to his rank and pedigree: and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by the hand of his servant Ahijah the prophet , (1 Kings 14:13).

Ver. 19 . And the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he warred , etc.] As he did with Rehoboam, (1 Kings 14:30), and with Abijam his son, who was an more than a match for him, (see 2 Chronicles 13:1-22) and how he reigned ; over the people of Israel, whether wisely, and justly, and in clemency, or not: behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel ; not in that canonical book of Scripture, so called, for in that there is very little account of the reign of Jeroboam; but in the annals and diaries of the kings of Israel, written by persons appointed for that purpose, and out of which it is generally thought that inspired writers, by divine direction, took what was thought proper to be transmitted to future times. So with the Romans, from their very beginning to the times of Mutius, all the events of every year were committed to writing by the order of the Pontifex Maximus, and lay open to be read by the people in common; and these, as Tully says, were what are called annals.

Ver. 20 . And the days which Jeroboam reigned were twenty two years , etc.] So that he outlived Rehoboam five years, and lived to the second year of the reign of his grandson Asa: and he slept with his fathers ; or died as they did: and Nadab his son reigned in his stead ; who perhaps was younger than Abijah, whose sickness and death are before related.

Ver. 21 . And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah , etc.] Over the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, when Jeroboam reigned over the other ten: Rehoboam [was] forty one years old when he began to reign ; being born one year before his father Solomon began to reign, and so it might have been expected he would have begun his reign more wisely than he did: and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem ; not half so long as his father and grandfather, being neither so wise nor so good a prince as either

of them: the city which the Lord did choose out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there ; to have a temple built for him, and his worship carried on in it; which was an aggravation of the sin of Rehoboam, that he should reign in such a place, and yet be guilty of the crimes he was; the three first years he reigned well, but afterwards forsook the law of the Lord, (2 Chronicles 11:17 12:1) and his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess ; and which is observed again, (1 Kings 14:31), she being the instrument of drawing him into idolatry, which it is very probable she practised in the days of Solomon, (1 Kings 11:5,7).

Ver. 22 . And Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord , etc.] At the end of three years, from the beginning of the reign of Rehoboam: and they provoked him to jealousy, with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done ; that is, with their idolatries; for they were the sins which moved the Lord to jealousy, and provoked the eyes of his glory; in which they had outdone not the ten tribes, but their fathers, in the times of Moses, Joshua, and the judges, and of their kings before their separation, Saul, David, and Solomon.

Ver. 23 . For they also built them high places , etc.] Which, though allowed of, or at least connived at, before the temple was built, and when the tabernacle was unfixed, yet afterwards unlawful; and the tribe of Judah could have no excuse for them, who had the temple in their tribe: and images ; contrary to the express command of God, (Exodus 20:4), and groves on every high hill, and under every green tree ; that is, set up idols, and temples for idols, amidst groves of trees, and under all green trees; as was the custom of the Heathens, who sacrificed on the heights of hills and tops of mountains, as was particularly the custom of the Persians, as both Herodotus and Xenophon relate; and with the Getae, a people in Thrace, was a mountain they reckoned sacred f338 .

Ver. 24 . And there were also Sodomites in the land , &c.] Such as were addicted to unnatural lusts between men and men, which the men of Sodom were guilty of, from whence they had their name: Jarchi interprets the word adultery and some versions render it whoremongers; and filthy actions of this nature, both by men and women, usually attended idolatrous practices among the heathens; in their temples and groves such wickednesses were privately perpetrated: [and] they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord cast out before the children of Israel ; the Canaanites, of whose uncleannesses, incests, and bestialities,

(see Leviticus 18:1-30).

Ver. 25 . And it came to pass in the fifth year of King Rehoboam , etc.] Two years after he and his people fell into the above wicked practices: that Shishak, king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem ; of whom (see 1 Kings 11:40), this was suffered as a chastisement from the Lord for their abominations.

Ver. 26 . And he took away the treasures of the house of the Lord , etc.] Which perhaps Jeroboam had informed him of, and for the sake of which he came, as well as to make a diversion in favour of Jeroboam, who had contracted an intimacy with him when in Egypt; and who might have no regard for Rehoboam, who was not a son of Pharaoh's daughter, and so no relation to him: these were the treasures which David had left to his son Solomon, and had dedicated for the temple, even gold, silver, and vessels, which he put among the treasures of the house of the Lord, and perhaps added to them, (1 Kings 7:51), and the treasures of the king's house; the riches, gold, silver, and jewels, whatever of worth and value he had in his chests and cabinets: he even took away all : that he could find and come at; for that there were some left is plain from (1 Kings 15:18), and he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made ; and which were put in the house of the forest of Lebanon, (1 Kings 10:16,17).

Ver. 27 . And King Rehoboam made in their stead brazen shields , etc.] For the king of Egypt had so stripped him of his gold, that he was not able to replace golden ones: and committed them into the hands of the chief of the guard ; or "runners" f339 , that went before the king, or attended him as his bodyguard when he went abroad: which kept the door of the king's house ; which kept guard night and day in their turns.

Ver. 28 . And it was so, when the king went into the house of the Lord , etc.] The temple; for though he had fallen into idolatry, he had not wholly forsaken the worship of God in the temple, and perhaps by the late humbling providence he might be stirred up to attend there more frequently: that the guard bare them : before him, partly for pomp and grandeur, and partly to keep in awe such as were inclined to mutiny and sedition: and brought them back into the guard chamber ; when the king returned, the place where the guard lodged and slept by turns.

Ver. 29 . Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam and all that he did ,

etc.] In the course of his reign, that was memorable: are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah ? who had annalists or historiographers to write for them, as the kings of Israel had, (1 Kings 14:19), in the writing of which, especially with respect to genealogies, Shemaiah the prophet, and Iddo the seer, were concerned, (2 Chronicles 12:15).

Ver. 30 . And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days .] For though Rehoboam did not enter into an offensive war, and attack the children of Israel, being dissuaded from it by Shemaiah the prophet in the name of the Lord, yet he might maintain a defensive war; and though there were no pitched battles between them as afterwards, in his son's time, yet there might be skirmishes and bickerings on the borders of their countries.

Ver. 31 . And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David , etc.] Where David and Solomon were buried, (1 Kings 2:10 11:43) and his mother's name was Naamah, an Ammonitess; which is repeated, that it might be observed as what was the leading step to his idolatry, and the means of his continuing in it: and Abijam his son reigned in his stead; of whom there is a further account in the following chapter.

CHAPTER - INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 15

in this chapter we have a short history of the reign of Abijam, (1 Kings 15:1-8) and of Asa, (1 Kings 14:9-24), both kings of Judah; and of the reigns of Nadab the son of Jeroboam, and of Baasha, who destroyed his family, both kings of Israel, (1 Kings 15:25-34).

Ver. 1 . Now in the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam the son of Nebat reigned Abijam over Judah .] That is, began to reign; and by this it appears that Rehoboam was in the eighteenth year of his reign when he died, for he and Jeroboam began their reign at the same time.

Ver. 2 . Three years reigned he in Jerusalem , etc.] And three only; his reign was short, and indeed not three full years, only one whole year and part of two others; for Asa his son began to reign in the twentieth of Jeroboam, (1 Kings 15:9) so that he reigned part of his eighteenth, this whole nineteenth, and part of his twentieth: and his mother's name was Maachah the daughter of Abishalom ; called Absalom, (2 Chronicles

11:20,21), generally supposed by the Jews to be Absalom the son of David, and which may seem not improbable, since his other two wives were of his father's family, (2 Chronicles 11:18).

Josephus says she was the daughter of Tamar the daughter of Absalom, and so his granddaughter; and which may account for her being called Michaiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah, (2 Chronicles 13:2) since the difference between Maachah and Michaiah is not very great; and Uriel might be the name of Tamar's husband; though it is most likely that both father and daughter had two names; she seems to be mentioned here, to observe that she was the cause and means of her son's disagreeable walk, as follows, (see 1 Kings 15:13).

Ver. 3 . And he walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him , etc.] Having such bad examples as both parents to copy after; it chiefly respects idolatrous practices, (see 1 Kings 14:23), and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God ; he did profess the true God, and worshipped him, but not wholly, and only, and sincerely; he worshipped other gods besides him: and so his heart was not as the heart of David his father ; who was a sole and sincere worshipper of God, never departed from him and his service.

Ver. 4 . Nevertheless, for David's sake did the Lord his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem , etc.] A kingdom there, as the Targum, splendid and glorious, to be continued in his posterity: to set up his son after him; in it: and to establish Jerusalem : to continue that in which the temple was, for the sake of which, and the worship of God in it, there was a succession of David's posterity on the throne of Judah.

Ver. 5 . Because David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord , etc.] With respect to worship: and turned not aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life; especially in matters of religion, nor even in his moral walk and conversation, deliberately, studiously, and with design: save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite ; the killing of him, and other sins which led on to it, and were in connection with it; Abarbinel thinks, because the affair of Bathsheba is not mentioned, that was not reckoned to David as a sin; but no doubt it was, and is included here.

Ver. 6 . And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life .] Not the days of Rehoboam, though that was true, and is

observed, (1 Kings 14:30), but all the days of Abijam, before he came to the throne, and in which, when a young man, he was concerned, and which still continued between him and Jeroboam; though some think he is called by his father's name, as Rehoboam is called David, (1 Kings 12:16).

Ver. 7 . Now the rest of the acts of Abijam, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah ? etc.] Which seem to be written by Iddo the prophet, (see 2 Chronicles 13:22), and there was war between Abijam and Jeroboam ; and a famous pitched battle between them we read of in (2 Chronicles 13:3,17).

Ver. 8 . And Abijam slept with his fathers , etc.] That is, died as they did: and they buried him in the city of David , in the sepulchre of his royal ancestors, David, Solomon, and Rehoboam: and Asa his son reigned in his stead ; who perhaps was the eldest of his twenty two sons, (2 Chronicles 13:21).

Ver. 9 . And in the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel reigned Asa over Judah .] How this is to be accounted for (see Gill on “ 1 Kings 15:2”).

Ver. 10 . And forty one years reigned he in Jerusalem , etc.] Being a good king, had the blessing of a long reign, and reached, and even exceeded, the years of the reigns of David and Solomon: and his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom ; that is the name of his grandmother, (see 1 Kings 15:2) she is called his mother, not because she brought him forth, but because she brought him up; and this is observed to his commendation, that though he was educated by an idolatrous woman, yet was not corrupted by her as his father was.

Ver. 11 . And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, as did David his father .] In his personal walk and conversation, in his government of the nation, and especially in the matters of his God, and of religion, he made David his pattern and example to copy after.

Ver. 12 . And he took away the Sodomites out of the land , etc.] Which were in the times of Rehoboam, (1 Kings 14:24), and continued in his father's reign; those he took away, either by driving them out of the land, or by putting them to death according to the law of God, (Leviticus 20:13) even as many of them as he had knowledge of, for some remained, (see

1 Kings 22:46), and removed all the idols that his fathers had made ; or suffered to be made, as Solomon, Rehoboam, and Abijam, (see 1 Kings 11:7 14:23 15:3).

Ver. 13 . And also Maachah his mother, even her he removed from being queen , etc.] From the kingdom, as the Targum; from having any share in the government, as she might have had during his minority, his mother being dead, as some conjecture; and not only took away her power and authority, but all the ensigns of it, and perhaps forbid her the court: or he removed her from the queen, his own wife, that she might not be corrupted by her; or rather it was from presiding over the rites of the idol next mentioned, and the worshipping of it: because she had made an idol in a grove ; which had its name from horror and trembling; either because it was of a terrible aspect, or injected horror into its worshippers, or brought terrible calamities and judgments upon them: according to some Jewish writers f341 , it was a Priapus, of an obscene figure; and so others f342 , who suppose she presided over the sacred rites of this impure deity, the same with Baalpeor; and the Heathens used to place Priapus in their gardens f343 , to fright away birds, (see Gill on “ Jeremiah 49:16”), others take it to be Pan, from whence the word “Panic”, used for any great fright: and Asa destroyed her idol, and burnt it by the brook Kidron : and cast the ashes of it into it, that none might have any profit by it, the gold and silver on it, and in indignation to it, (see Exodus 32:20).

Ver. 14 . But the high places were not removed , etc.] That is, such as had been used for the worship of God, before the temple was built, which yet now should have been removed, since sacrifice was now only to be offered there; but he might think they were still lawful, or the people had such an opinion of them, that it was difficult and dangerous to attempt to remove them; otherwise high places for idolatry were removed by him, (Chronicles 14:3), nevertheless, Asa’s heart was perfect all his days ; he was sincere in the worship of God, and did everything to the best of his knowledge and capacity for restoring true religion, and destroying idolatry.

Ver. 15 . And he brought in the things which his father had dedicated , etc.] The spoils he had taken in war from Jeroboam, and which he had devoted to religious uses, but lived not to perform his vows, which his son now did for him; so that it seems, notwithstanding the sins he fell into, he had some regard to God and his worship, (see 2 Chronicles 13:19) and the things which himself had dedicated ; out of the spoils taken from the

Ethiopians, (2 Chronicles 14:13,14), these he brought into the house of the Lord, silver, and gold, and vessels; of various sorts.

Ver. 16 . And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days :] That is as long as they lived together; for Baasha died many years before Asa, and this must be reckoned from the time the war began between them. Baasha did not begin his reign until the third year of Asa, (1 Kings 15:25) and in the first ten years of Asa's reign the land was quiet and free from war, (2 Chronicles 14:1) of which there must be seven in the reign of Baasha, who is here made mention of out of course, for Nadab reigned before him, (1 Kings 15:25-27), the reason of which Abarbinel thinks is, that the historian, having given an account of the good deeds of Asa, relates his failings before he proceeds to the other part of his history.

Ver. 17 . And Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah , etc.] Which, in (2 Chronicles 16:1) is said to be in the thirty sixth year of Asa's reign, or rather of his kingdom; for it can never mean the year of his reign, for Baasha was dead many years before that, since his reign began in the third of Asa, and he reigned but twenty four years, and therefore must die in the twenty seventh of Asa; but it is to be understood of the kingdom of Judah, when it was divided from Israel; from that time to this were thirty six years, seventeen under Rehoboam, three under Abijam, so that this year must be the sixteenth of Asa; thus it is calculated in the Jewish chronology f344 , and which is followed by many of the best of our chronologers: and built Ramah ; a city in the tribe of Benjamin, (Joshua 18:25), but taken by the king of Israel, which he rebuilt or fortified: that he might not suffer any to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah ; that his people might not go to and from Jerusalem, and worship at the temple there; this garrison lying on the borders of both kingdoms, he thought hereby to cut off all communication between them.

Ver. 18 . Then Asa took all the silver and the gold that were left in the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house , etc.] What was left untaken away by Shishak king of Egypt, (1 Kings 14:26), or what he had put there dedicated by his father and himself, (Kings 15:15) and be they either, they were not to be taken, especially the treasures of the house of the Lord, and put to profane use, and particularly to such bad purposes as these were: and delivered them into the hands of his servants : to be disposed of as next directed: and King Asa sent them to Benhadad the son of Tabrimon, the son of Hezion king of Syria, that

dwelt at Damascus ; according to some chronologers f345 , Hezion, the grandfather of this Benhadad, is the same with Rezon the first king of Damascus, (1 Kings 11:23,24), who was succeeded by Tabrimon, and he by Benhadad: saying : as follows.

Ver. 19 . There is a league between me and thee, and between my father and thy father , etc.] For though Hezion, if he is the same with Rezon, was an adversary to Israel in the days of Solomon, (1 Kings 11:25), yet it seems his son was not, but was a confederate with the kings of Israel and Judah: behold, I have sent unto thee a present of silver and gold ; taken out of the treasury of the temple and his own treasury: come and break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me ; it was sinful in him to take the money out of the temple, to which it was dedicated; it was more so to make use of it to bribe an Heathen to break his covenant and alliance with another, in order to serve him; in which he betrayed great distrust of the Lord, and of his power to help him; which was the more aggravated, when he had had such a wonderful appearance of God for him against the Ethiopians, (see 2 Chronicles 16:7,8).

Ver. 20 . So Benhadad hearkened unto King Asa, and sent the captains of the hosts which he had against the cities of Israel , etc.] He broke off his alliance with the king of Israel; and as he had a standing army, with proper officers, he sent them directly to take the cities of Israel: and he smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abelbethmaachah, and all Cinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali ; places which lay on the northern part of Israel, the nearest to Syria. Ijon some place in the tribe of Naphtali, others in Asher; it seems to be on the extreme border of the land northward, as Dan also was; hence the phrase from Dan to Beersheba, i.e. from north to south. Abelbethmaachah is the same with Abelmaim, (2 Chronicles 16:4) which perhaps is the same with that Abela, placed by Jerome f346 between Damascus and Paneas, supposed to be the Enhydra of Pliny f347 .

Cinneroth is the same with Gennesaret, a fruitful country in Galilee, from which is a sea or lake of that name, mentioned in the New Testament, and was in the tribe of Naphtali, the land of which was seized upon at this time.

Ver. 21 . And it came to pass, when Baasha heard thereof , etc.] What was doing in the northern part of his kingdom: that he left off building of Ramah ; which was the thing designed to be answered by this diversion:

and dwelt in Tirzah ; in the tribe of Manasseh, nearer at hand, to observe and stop the motions of the Syrian king.

Ver. 22 . Then King Asa made a proclamation throughout all Judah , etc.] Summoned men of all sorts, ranks, and degrees: (none was exempted;) the Jews say, not so much as a newly married man, whom the law excused from war the first year, nor the disciples of the wise men: and they took away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha had builded ; or fortified the place; these; the men of Judah, whom Asa summoned, carried off: and King Asa built with them Geba of Benjamin, and Mizpah ; which were both in the tribe of Benjamin, and which he fortified, (Joshua 18:24,26) (Jeremiah 41:10).

Ver. 23 . The rest of all the acts of Asa, and all his might, and all that he did, and the cities which he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah ? etc.] Some of which are to be met with in the canonical book of that name, (2 Chronicles 14:1-16:14), and others in the annals of the kings, out of which the Scripture account was taken: nevertheless, in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet ; seized with the gout, as the Jews say f349 , and which was two years before his death, (see 2 Chronicles 16:12,13).

Ver. 24 . And Asa slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father , etc.] In a sepulchre there he himself had made, and in great pomp and solemnity, being laid on a bed filled with sweet odours and spices, prepared according to art, and which were burned for him, (2 Chronicles 16:14), and Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead ; a very pious and worthy prince.

Ver. 25 . And Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah , etc.] Before Baasha did: and reigned over Israel two years , not two whole years; for he began in the second of Asa, and in the third of that king's reign Baasha slew him, and reigned in his stead, (1 Kings 15:28).

Ver. 26 . And he did evil in the sight of the Lord , etc.] Committed idolatry, than which nothing is a greater evil in his sight: and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin : in making and worshipping of golden calves.

Ver. 27 . And Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar , etc.] A man of that tribe; but who he was, or his father, is nowhere else said, very probably an officer in Nadab's army: conspired against him ; laid a scheme to take away his life, and seize the kingdom: and Baasha smote him at Gibbethon ; a city in the tribe of Dan, (Joshua 19:44) which belongeth to the Philistines ; it was a city given to the Levites, (Joshua 21:23) and they being driven from it by Jeroboam, the Philistines seized on it, or had heretofore made a conquest of it; and Nadab was desirous of getting it out of their hands, and therefore besieged it, as follows: for Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon ; and while he was besieging it, Baasha took the opportunity to slay him, where his carcass lay exposed to dogs, or fowls of the air, and had no burial, as Ahijah predicted, (1 Kings 14:11,13).

Ver. 28 . Even in the third year of Asa king of Judah did Baasha slay him, and reigned in his stead .] Which seems to be his only or chief view in slaying him, to get possession of his kingdom.

Ver. 29 . And it came to pass, when he reigned, that he smote all the house of Jeroboam , etc.] That he might have no rival, or any that could pretend any title to the crown: he left not Jeroboam any that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according to the saying of the Lord, which he spake by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite ; not that his intention in destroying Jeroboam's family was to fulfil that prophecy, but so it was eventually; (see 1 Kings 14:10,14). Ver. 30 . Because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, by his provocation wherewith he provoked the Lord God of Israel .] Not that Baasha destroyed the family of Jeroboam because of his sins, which did so much mischief to Israel, and were so provoking to the Lord, from any dislike or hatred of them, for he walked in the same, (1 Kings 15:34), but the Lord threatened this by his prophet, and suffered it to be done because of his abominations.

Ver. 31 . Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did , etc.] In his short reign, which yet were more than here related: are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel ? in which those of his father Jeroboam were written, (1 Kings 14:19).

Ver. 32 . And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days .] For being a wicked man, and an idolater, Asa had no respect for him, though he had slain the family of Jeroboam; nor had Baasha any regard to Judah, nor to the worship of God at Jerusalem, so that there was

no good understanding between them, but frequent acts of hostility, (see 1 Kings 15:16).

Ver. 33 . In the third year of Asa king of Judah began Baasha the son of Ahijah to reign over all Israel in Tirzah , etc.] Which is repeated, partly to observe that the whole kingdom submitted to him, though an usurper and murderer, and the place where he kept his court, as also the time of his reign, as follows: twenty four years ; which were as long as both Jeroboam and his son reigned.

Ver. 34 . And he did evil in the sight of the Lord , etc.] As Nadab did, whom he slew: and walked in the way of Jeroboam ; whose family he destroyed: and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin ; in worshipping the golden calves; so that it was not out of dislike to idolatry, but out of malice and ambition, that he slew the family of Jeroboam.

CHAPTER - INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 16

This chapter contains a prophecy of the ruin of the family of Baasha, and an account of his death, (1 Kings 16:1-7), and of his son's reigning in his stead two years, who was slain by Zimri one of his captains, (Kings 16:8-14), and who reigned but seven days, (1 Kings 16:15-20), and the people being divided between Tibni and Omri, the party for the latter prevailed, and he was made king, and reigned twelve years, (Kings 16:21-28), and was succeeded by his son Ahab, a very wicked prince, (1 Kings 16:29-33), and the chapter is concluded with the rebuilding of Jericho, (1 Kings 16:34).

Ver. 1 . Then the word of the Lord came to Jehu the son of Hanani , etc.] The seer that reprov'd Asa, (2 Chronicles 16:7), so that this man was the son of a prophet then living, and was a young man; for we hear of him several years after reprov'g Jehoshaphat, (2 Chronicles 19:2), and as a writer of history, (2 Chronicles 20:34), the prophecy that came to him from the Lord was against Baasha ; king of Israel: saying ; as follows.

Ver. 2 . Forasmuch as I exalted thee out of the dust , etc.] From a very low estate, and mean family: and made thee prince over my people Israel ; as they were of right, and ought to have been; and though Baasha got the kingdom by treachery and murder, yet the translation of the kingdom to him was according to the appointment of God, and by his overruling

providence; and even his act of killing Nadab was a fulfilment of a prophecy of his; and had he done it in obedience to the will of God, and in vengeance for his sin, would not have been blameworthy, since then he would have been an executioner of the justice of God: and thou hast walked in the way of Jeroboam, and hast made my people Israel to sin, to provoke me to anger with their sins ; committing and encouraging the same idolatrous practices, so very provoking to God.

Ver. 3 . Behold, I will take away the posterity of Baasha, and the posterity of his house , etc.] By death, there shall be none of his family remaining in any branch of it: and I will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat ; execute the same judgment on it, and in the same manner, their sins being alike.

Ver. 4 . Him that dieth of Baasha in the city shall the dogs eat, and him that dieth of his in the fields shall the fowls of the air eat .] They should not have burial, which is just the same that was threatened to and executed on Jeroboam's family, (1 Kings 14:11).

Ver. 5 . Now the rest of the acts of Baasha, and what he did, and his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel ?] As those of Jeroboam and Nadab were, (1 Kings 14:19 15:31).

Ver. 6 . So Baasha slept with his fathers , etc.] Or died, not a violent, but natural, death: and was buried in Tirzah ; where was the royal palace of the kings of Israel: and Elah his son reigned in his stead ; yet but a short time.

Ver. 7 . And also by the hand of the prophet Jehu, the son of Hanani, came the word of the Lord against Baasha, and against his house , etc.] Which is here repeated, as Abarbinel thinks, because in the former prophecy the threatening was on account not of his own sin, but because he made Israel to sin; but here it is because of his own evil works, as it follows: even for all the evil that he did in the sight of the Lord, in provoking him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam : worshipping the golden calves as they did: and because he killed him ; either Jeroboam; for, according to Dr.

Lightfoot f350 , he was alive this year; rather Nadab the son of Jeroboam, who it is certain was slain by Baasha; though it may refer, as Abarbinel thinks, to the whole house of Jeroboam; though it was agreeable

to the will of God, yet was not done by Baasha with any regard to it, but to gratify his malice and ambition, and therefore punishable for it.

Ver. 8 . In the twenty sixth year of Asa king of Judah began Elah the son of Baasha to reign over Israel in Tirzah, two years .] Not complete, for he died in the twenty seventh of Asa, (1 Kings 16:10) he reigned just the time that Nadab the son of Jeroboam did, (1 Kings 15:25).

Ver. 9 . And his servant Zimri, captain of half his chariots , etc.] His military chariots; there were two captains of them, and this was one of them; so the Targum, “one of the two masters or captains of the chariots:” conspired against him, as he was in Tirzah drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza, steward of his house in Tirzah ; who had the charge of his wine and other liquors, to which he was addicted beyond measure; and this was a fit opportunity for Zimri to fall upon him, and slay him, when he was drunk, and off his guard, and his army at the same time was besieging Gibbethon, (1 Kings 16:15) so that there was a very great likeness in what befell the family of Baasha, to that of the family of Jeroboam; for as the son of the one, and of the other, reigned but two years, so they were both slain by their servants, and both at a time when Gibbethon was besieged; the Targum takes this Arza to be the temple of an idol so called, near the royal palace.

Ver. 10 . And Zimri went in and smote him, and killed him , etc.] When in his drunken fit: and this was in the twenty seventh year of Asa ; when Elah had not reigned two full years: and reigned in his stead ; that is, Zimri; his reign was short indeed, but seven days, (1 Kings 16:15).

Ver. 11 . And it came to pass when he began to reign, as soon as he sat on his throne , etc.] Perhaps the very first day, that he slew all the house of Baasha ; his whole family, all the children that he had, that there might be none to make pretensions to the throne: he left him not one that pisseth against a wall, neither of his kinsfolks nor of his friends ; not any that might avenge the blood of his family, that might have a right or inclination to do it.

Ver. 12 . Thus did Zimri destroy all the house of Baasha, according to the word of the Lord, which he spoke against Baasha by Jehu the prophet .] That not only his posterity, but all any way related to him, should be cut off; yea, it seems to have been carried further, even to all that were in any

connection with him in point of friendship, (see 1 Kings 16:3).

Ver. 13 . For all the sins of Baasha, and the sins of Elah his son , etc.] By which it appears that the son trod in the steps of his father, and was therefore cut off: by which they sinned, and by which they made Israel to sin, in provoking the Lord God of Israel to anger with their vanities ; their idols, which had nothing in them, and cannot be of any service to their worshippers; and to serve such, and neglect the worship of the true God, and draw others into the same iniquity, must be very provoking to the most High.

Ver. 14 . Now the rest of the acts of Elah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?] (see Kings 16:5).

Ver. 15 . In the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah did Zimri reign seven days in Tirzah , etc] Until the army under Omri came and took the palace, and destroyed him: and the people were encamped against Gibbethon, which belongeth to the Philistines ; it was besieged in Nadab's time, but upon his death, by Baasha, the siege was raised; or however, if then taken, it was recovered by the Philistines, and now besieged again by the Israelites, (see 1 Kings 15:27).

Ver. 16 . And the people that were encamped heard say, Zimri hath conspired, and hath also slain the king , etc.] Tidings came to the army of what he had done, which was displeasing to them: wherefore all Israel made Omri, the captain of the host, king over Israel that day in the camp ; that is, all Israel that were in the army proclaimed Omri, their general, king; just as the Roman army declared Vespasian, their general, emperor of Rome, and as several of the emperors were chosen. Ver. 17 . And Omri went up from Gibbethon, and all Israel with him , etc.] He, and the army under him, broke up the siege of that place, and marched to Tirzah; which, according, to Bunting were thirty six miles distant from each other: and they besieged Tirzah; the royal city, in which Zimri was.

Ver. 18 . And it came to pass, that when Zimri saw that the city was taken , etc.] That Omri, and the army with him, had got into it, being a place not much fortified, and Zimri not having force enough to defend it against such an army: that he went into the palace of the king's house ; into the innermost and most splendid, as well as the strongest part of it:

and burnt the king's house over him with fire, and he died ; that he might not fall into the hands of his rival, who he might fear would use him ill, and that he might not enjoy the royal palace; though Kimchi thinks that Omri set fire to the palace, and burnt it over the head of Zimri, in which he perished; and this sense the text will bear.

Ver. 19 . For his sins which he sinned in doing evil in the sight of the Lord , etc.] In the former part of his life, as well as now: in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he did to make Israel sin ; worshipping the golden calves, which he might do while a captain of the chariots, and also since he usurped the crown, sacrificing to them by way of thanksgiving, for being in possession of the kingdom; and though his reign was so short, he might give plain and strong intimations that he should continue the worship of idols.

Ver. 20 . Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and his treason that he wrought, are they not written in the book of the kings of Israel ?] What he did both before and after his usurpation, during the seven days he was king, and the manner of his conspiracy, and success in it.

Ver. 21 . Then were the people of Israel divided into two parts , etc.] About the succession in the kingdom: half the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king : these were the friends of Zimri, or however such who did not like that the army should impose a king upon them; who this Tibni was is not said: and half followed Omri ; the general of the army, perhaps the whole of that. Ver. 22 . But the people that followed Omri prevailed against the people that followed Tibni the son of Ginath , etc.] Very probably they had a battle, in which the latter were worsted: so Tibni died ; in the battle: and Omri reigned ; took possession of the throne, his rival being slain.

Ver. 23 . In the thirty first year of Asa king of Judah began Omri to reign over Israel twelve years , etc.] Which are to be reckoned not from the thirty first of Asa; for Ahab the son of Omri began to reign in his thirty eighth year, and so his reign would be but seven or eight years; but they are reckoned from the twenty seventh of Asa, the beginning of it, when Elah was slain by Zimri, and he died, which to the end of the thirty eight of Asa make twelve years; for the division, according to the Jewish chronology f352 , lasted four years; Jarchi says five f353 ; and from the beginning of that his reign is reckoned, though he did not reign over all Israel, or

completely, until the thirty first of Asa, when Tibni died: six years reigned he in Tirzah ; the royal city of the kings of Israel, from Jeroboam to this time, and the other six he reigned in Samaria, built by him, as in the next verse.

Ver. 24 . And he bought the hill of Samaria of Shemer, for two talents of silver , etc.] A talent of silver, according to Brerewood f354 , was of our money three hundred and seventy five pounds, so that this hill was purchased at seven hundred and fifty pounds: and built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill, Samaria ; its name from him was Shomeron, which is the Hebrew name for Samaria; which, according to Bunting was six miles from Tirzah, and ever after the royal seat of the kings of Israel.

Ver. 25 . But Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the Lord , etc.] Openly and publicly, as if it were in defiance of him: and did worse than all that were before him ; taking no warning by the judgments inflicted on them, which aggravated his sins; and besides, he not only worshipped the calves, as the rest, and drew Israel by his example into the same, as they did, but he published edicts and decrees, obliging them to worship them, and forbidding them to go to Jerusalem, called “the statutes of Omri”, (Micah 6:16).

Ver. 26 . For he walked in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin , etc.] Worshipping the calves; to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger with their vanities ; these, and whatsoever idols else were worshipped by him, (see 1 Kings 16:13).

Ver. 27 . Now the rest of the acts of Omri, which he did, and his might which he showed, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel ?] Where those of the preceding kings were written, (see 1 Kings 14:19 15:31 16:5,14,20).

Ver. 28 . So Omri slept with his fathers , etc.] Died a natural death: and was buried in Samaria ; the city he had built, and now the royal seat and metropolis of the kingdom: and Ahab his son reigned in his stead ; of whom much is said in the following history.

Ver. 29 . And in the thirty fifth year of Asa king of Judah began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel , etc.] At the latter end of it, the

same year his father died, (see 1 Kings 16:23) and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty two years ; the same number of years Jeroboam did, (1 Kings 14:20).

Ver. 30 . And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord, above all that were before him .] Adding other idols to the calves, and those more abominable than they; since the other kings pretended to worship God in them, but he worshipped other gods besides him, as the following verses show.

Ver. 31 . And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat , etc.] To worship the golden calves he set up: that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians ; who is called Ithobalus and Itobalus king of the Tyrians, by Heathen historians f356 ; and, by Theophilus of Antioch f357 , Juthobalus, priest of Astarte; for Tyre and Zidon were under one king. This woman was not only of another nation, and an idolater, but a very filthy woman, and is made the emblem of the whore of Rome, (Revelation 2:20) and went and served Baal, and worshipped him that is, went to Zidon and Tyre, and worshipped his wife's gods, which were either Jupiter Thalassius, the god of the Zidoaians, or Hercules, whom the Tyrians worshipped.

Ver. 32 . And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria .] That he might not go so far as Tyre or Zidon; and for his wife's convenience also he built a temple in Samaria for Baal, and erected an altar there to offer sacrifices upon it unto him; so open and daring was he in his idolatrous practices.

Ver. 33 . And Ahab made a grove , etc.] About the temple of Baal, or elsewhere, in which he placed an idol, and where all manner of filthiness was secretly committed; or rather "Asherah", rendered "grove", is Astarte, the goddess of the Zidonians, an image of which Ahab made: and Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him : his idolatries being more open and barefaced, and without any excuse, presence, or colour, as well as more numerous.

Ver. 34 . And in his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho , etc.] Which was forbidden by Joshua under an anathema; but this man, either ignorant of that adjuration of Joshua, or in contempt and defiance of it, and knowing it might please the king and queen, set about the rebuilding

of it; and it being done by the leave and under the authority of Ahab, is mentioned together with his wicked actions: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn : that is, his firstborn died as soon as he laid the foundation of the city, but this did not deter him from going on with it: and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub ; all the rest of his children died as he was rebuilding the city, until only his youngest son was left, and he was taken off by death just as he had finished it, signified by setting up the gates of it: all which was according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun : between four hundred and five hundred years ago. It was after this a place of great note, and so continued many hundreds of years; (see Gill on “ Joshua 6:26”) but is now, as Mr. Maundrell says f358 , a poor nasty village of the Arabs.

CHAPTER - INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 17

This chapter begins with a prophecy of Elijah, that there should be want of rain for some years to come, and he is directed to go first to the brook Cherith, where he should be fed by ravens, (1 Kings 17:1-7), and afterwards he is sent to a widow at Zarephath, where he, she, and her son, were supported for a considerable time with a handful of meal, and a little oil in a cruse miraculously increased, (1 Kings 17:8-16), whose son falling sick and dying, he restored to life, (1 Kings 17:17-24).

Ver. 1 . And Elijah the Tishbite, [who] was of the inhabitants of Gilead , etc.] Which belonged partly to the Reubenites and Gadites, and partly to the half-tribe of Manasseh on the other side Jordan, where this prophet dwelt; but why he is called the Tishbite is not easy to say; what Kimchi observes seems right, that he was at first of a city called Toshab, and afterward's dwelt at Gilead; which city perhaps is the same with Thisbe, in the tribe of Naphtali, the native place of Tobit, “Who in the time of Enemessar king of the Assyrians was led captive out of Thisbe, which is at the right hand of that city, which is called properly Nephthali in Galilee above Aser.” (Tobit 1:2) and, if so, is an instance of a prophet, even the prince of prophets, as Abarbinel calls him, coming out of Galilee, contrary to the suggestions of the Jews, (John 7:52). R. Elias Levita observes, that after the affair of Gibeah an order was given to smite the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead, (Judges 21:8-15), and that as it is reasonable to suppose some might escape, he thinks Elijah was one of them; and that when this began to be inhabited again, they that returned were called the inhabitants of Gilead, of whom Elijah was, who lived in those times, being, as the Jews

suppose, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the son of Aaron, (see Judges 20:28), but that he should be Elijah, and live to the times of Ahab, is beyond belief. By Origen he is said to be in Thesbon of Gilead; and by Epiphanius to be of Thesbis, of the land of the Arabians, Gilead bordering upon it: the same said unto Ahab ; who perhaps had been with him before, and reprov'd him for idolatry, warn'd him of the evil consequences of it, but to no purpose, and therefore now threaten'd in a very solemn manner: as the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand ; he swears by the living God, in whose presence he was, and to whom he appeals as the omniscient God, whose minister and prophet he was, and in whose name he came and spoke, and to whom he pray'd; for standing was a prayer gesture, and sometimes put for it, (see Gill on “ Matthew 6:5”) and it was at the prayer of Elijah that rain was withheld, as follows, (see James 5:17) there shall not be dew nor rain these years ; for some years to come, even three years and a half: but according to my word ; in prayer, or as he should predict, in the name of the Lord.

Ver. 2 . And the word of the Lord came to him , etc.] The word of prophecy, as the Targum; this shows that by word, in the former verse, he means the word of the Lord by him: saying ; as follows.

Ver. 3 . Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward , etc.] From the place where he was, being in danger from Ahab and Jezebel, provok'd by his reproofs, threatenings, and prophecies: and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan ; in some wood or cave near it, or among the reeds and rushes that grew on the banks of it; and Bochart takes it to be the same with the river Kanah, on the borders of Ephraim, which has its name from reeds, (Joshua 16:8 17:9), and Cherith by anticipation, from the prophet's being fed there; and Adrichomius places this brook in the tribe of Ephraim; though Fuller f364 in the half tribe of Manasseh, beyond Jordan; but Bunting says it runs from Mount Ephraim between Bethel and Jericho, eight miles from Jerusalem towards the north, and so, passing along towards the east, falls into Jordan.

Ver. 4 . And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook , etc.] The water of that was to be his drink: and I have command'd the ravens to feed thee there ; whereby he should be provided with food to eat; by whom are meant not angels in the form of ravens, as some; nor, as others, Arabians, for there were none of that people near him; nor, as others, merchants, the word being sometimes used of them, for this was not a likely method for

privacy; nor, as others, the inhabitants of a place called Oreb, or Orbo; so the Arabic version calls them Orabimi; but we read of no such place near Jordan; the Jews f366 speak of a city of this name near Bethshean, from whence these Orebim came; and some of them think they had their name from Oreb, in (Judges 7:25) it seems better to interpret them of ravens, as we do, these creatures delighting to be in solitary places, in valleys, and by brooks; nor need it be any objection that they were unclean creatures by the law, since Elijah did not feed upon them, but was fed by them; and supposing any uncleanness by touch, the ceremonial law might be dispensed with in an extraordinary case, as it sometimes was; though it is very remarkable that such creatures should be employed in this way, which are birds of prey, seize on anything they can, live on carrion, and neglect their own young, and yet feed a prophet of the Lord; which shows the power and providence of God in it. Something like this Jerom relates, of a raven bringing a whole loaf of bread, and laying it before the saints, Paulus and Antonius.

Ver. 5 . So he went, and did according to the word of the Lord , etc.] Took his journey eastward, and hid himself in the place directed to: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan , (see Gill on “ 1 Kings 17:3”).

Ver. 6 . And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening , etc.] For his breakfast and supper, the two principal meals then in use; and as there were several employed, they could bring a sufficiency in a short time for each meal; and these provisions were ready prepared, the bread made and baked, and the flesh boiled, broiled, or roasted; from whence they had it need not be inquired after; the Jews say they were fetched from Ahab's table, and others from Jehoshaphat's, and others, as probable as any, from the tables of the 7000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal: and he drank of the brook ; at his meals. Ver. 7 . And it came to pass after a while , etc.] Or “at the end of days” f370 , perhaps a year, which sometimes is the sense of this phrase, (see Exodus 13:10 Judges 17:10), that the brook dried up ; through the excessive heat, and for want of supplies from the springs and fountains with which it was fed, and for the following reason: because there had been no rain in the land ; from the time Elijah prayed and prophesied; of this drought mention is made in profane history:

Menander, a Phoenician writer, speaks of a drought in the times of

Ithobalus (the same with Ethbaal the father of Jezebel), which lasted a whole year, and upon prayer being made there were thunder, etc.

Ver. 8 . And the word of the Lord came unto him , etc.] As before, after he had been a year at the brook, and that was dried up: saying ; as follows.

Ver. 9 . Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there , etc.] This might be a trial of the prophet's faith, to be sent to dwell in a place belonging to the Zidonians, among whom Jezebel had an interest, being the daughter of their king, (1 Kings 16:31), the place is so called, to distinguish it from another Zarephath, (Obidiah 1:20), Kimchi interprets it, near to Zidon, yet not as belonging to it, but of the land of Israel; though it rather seems to be a Gentile city; it is called, in (Luke 4:26) Sarepta of Sidon; and also by Pliny f372 ; according to Josephus f373 , it was not far either from Sidon or Tyre, and lay between them; it was three quarters of a mile from Sidon; and so Mr. Maundrell speaks of it as in the way from Sidon to Tyre, and which is now called Sarphan; of which he says, the place shown us for this city consisted only of a few houses, on the tops of the mountains, within about half a mile from the sea; but it is more probable the principal part of the city stood below in the space between the hills and the sea, there being ruins still to be seen in that place of a considerable extent; and a traveller into those parts many years before him says f375 , that he saw nothing of any building on the shore, but some small houses in the place where formerly the town of Sarepta did stand; and Bunting says f376 , there are at this time but eight houses in all the town, though by the ruins it seems to have been in times past a very fair city; and another observes, that it is about three miles from Berytus: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee ; not that this was declared to the woman, or that she had any orders from the Lord to support him; but that he had determined it in his mind, and would take care in his providence that he should be supplied by her: this was another trial of the prophet's faith, that he should be sent to a poor widow woman for his support, and she a Gentile; but he that had been so long fed by ravens, could have no reason to doubt of his being provided for in this way.

Ver. 10 . So he arose, and went to Zarephath , etc.] Which, according to Bunting f378 , was one hundred miles from the brook Cherith: and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering sticks : perhaps out of an hedge just without the city this shows her to be a poor woman, who had no other way of coming at fuel but this,

and no servant to fetch it for her: Bunting tells us, that now before the gate of the city there is showed a certain chapel, where they say Elias first spoke with the widow: and he called to her, and said, fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink ; being thirsty through travelling, and supposing this to be the woman he was directed to, made trial of her this way; some render it, “in this vessel” f379 , which he had with him, and made use of at the brook Cherith.

Ver. 11 . And as she was going to fetch it , etc.] For she made no difficulty of granting his request, but immediately set out to fetch him some water from the city, or some spring close by, or her own house; being very ready to do an hospitable act to a stranger, and especially to a good man, and a prophet, as she might perceive by his habit he was, as it seems by what follows: and said, bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand ; to eat before he drank; this he said still further to try her whether she was the person that was to sustain him, as well as in order to lead on to more discourse with her.

Ver. 12 . And she said, as the Lord thy God liveth , etc.] Which shows her to be a good woman, swearing by the living God, and him only, and that she took Elijah to be a good man, and a prophet of the Lord: I have not a cake ; greater or less, not a morsel of bread in the house: but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse ; these separate and unmixed, and not made into a cake, and dressed as she intended to do with them: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks ; or a few, which would be sufficient to bake such a quantity as her meal and oil would make; she speaks by the figure “meiosis”, which expresses less than what is meant, as Ben Melech observes: that I may go in and dress it for me, and my son, that we may eat it, and die ; having nothing more left, and no expectation of any elsewhere, and the famine strong in the land; so that she could look for nothing but death after this was eaten.

Ver. 13 . And Elijah said unto her, fear not , etc.] That she and her son should die, it would not be the case: go and do as thou hast said : mix her meal and her oil, and make a cake thereof, and bake it: but make thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son : which was not said from a selfish spirit of the prophet, but to try the faith of the woman; and besides, as Abarbinel observes, the prophet was not only hungry and thirsty through his journey, and so required to be served first, but it was for the sake of his sustenance, that the Lord would

command a blessing on the meal and oil; wherefore, if she dressed it for herself and her son first, there would have been none left for the divine blessing to descend upon.

Ver. 14 . For thus saith the Lord God of Israel , etc.] Whom the prophet perceived she had knowledge of, and faith in: the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail ; that is, the meal in the barrel, and the oil in the cruse, by an hypallage, or change of words: until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth ; which was assuring her the rain would be sent, and that the Lord, who had the sole command of it, would send it; and that, until that time it should be sent, she would have no lack of provisions, and therefore need not scruple dressing for the prophet first. Ver. 15 . And she went, and did according to the saying of Elijah , etc.].

Made a cake for him first, and brought it to him, which showed great faith in the word of the Lord by him: and she, and he, and her house, did eat ; many days, a year at least, if not two years, (see 1 Kings 17:7) the widow, the prophet, and her family, lived upon the meal and oil so long; we read but of one son, but she might have more.

Ver. 16 . And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah .] There being a continual increase and supply of both, through the mighty power of God working a continued miracle; just as the loaves and fishes were increased while the disciples were eating, (Matthew 14:19,20).

Ver. 17 . And it came to pass after these things , etc.] Not only after the conversation that passed between the prophet, and the widow, but after they had lived together many days, a year or years, upon the miraculous provision made for them: that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick ; that is, the son of the widow woman in whose house the prophet dwelt; the Jews say this woman was the mother of Jonah, and that he was this son of her's: and his sickness was so sore that there was no breath left in him : it was a sickness unto death, it issued in it; for that he was really dead appears from all that follows.

Ver. 18 . And she said unto Elijah, what have I to do with thee, O thou man of God! etc.] As if she should say, it would have been well for me if I had never seen thy face, or had any conversation with thee; this she said rashly, and in her passion and agony, being extremely affected with the

death of her child, which made her forget and overlook all the benefits she had received through the prophet's being with her: art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son ? to punish her for her former sins, she was conscious she had been guilty of; for she supposed, that as it was by his prayer that the drought and famine were come upon the land, so it was in the same way that her son's death came, namely, through the prayer of the prophet. Ver. 19 . And he said unto her, give me thy son, and he took him out of her bosom , etc.] Where she had laid him, mourning over him; from thence the prophet took him with her leave: and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed ; an upper room, which was his bedchamber; hither he carried him, that he might be alone, and use the greater freedom both in his expressions and gestures.

Ver. 20 . And he cried unto the Lord , etc.] Or prayed unto him, as the Targum, with great vehemence and importunity: and said, O Lord, my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow, with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son ? he pleads his interest in the Lord, and makes use of it as an argument with him to hear his prayer; he observes the character and condition of the woman, a widow, such as the Lord has a compassionate regard for; and he urges the kindness of her to him, with whom he had sojourned so long; and seems to represent the case as an additional evil or affliction to him, as well as to the widow.

Ver. 21 . And he stretched himself upon the child three times , etc.] Or “measured himself” on it, or put himself into a posture in some respects equal to the child; putting his mouth on its mouth, his eyes on its eyes, his hands on its hands, as Elisha afterwards did in a like case, perhaps in imitation of him, (2 Kings 4:34), thereby showing his great affection to the child, and in order to increase it the more, and to make him the more fervent and importunate in his prayers for its life; and hereby signifying also that he would if he could infuse his breath and life into it, and warm it with his own heat: and cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again : which shows that the child was really dead; and a proof this that the soul dies not with the body, but exists in a separate state without it.

Ver. 22 . And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah , etc.] In prayer, and answered it: and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived ; this is the first instance of anyone being raised from the dead; this Satan

has imitated; hence the many fabulous stories with the Heathens of persons being raised to life after death f382 . Ver. 23 . And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house , etc.] Being come to life, he took it off of the bed in his bedchamber, and brought it down to the lower part of the house, where the woman was: and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, see, thy son liveth ; which no doubt was to her great surprise, and was a wonderful instance of divine power and goodness, and to which the apostle may have respect, (Hebrews 11:35), Bunting says, the inhabitants of this place now take upon them to show the chamber wherein the prophet Elias lived, when he raised the widow's child to life.

Ver. 24 . And the woman said to Elijah, now by this I know that thou art a man of God , etc.] She took him to be one at his first coming to her; she was in a great measure confirmed in it by the miracle of the barrel of meal and cruse of oil; but upon the death of her son, which she was ready to impute to the prophet, she was staggered at it; but now, by his resurrection from the dead, was fully assured of it: and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth ; she had known before that what he said concerning the meal and oil not failing was true; but now she was more and more convinced and assured that the God, whose prophet he was, was the true God, and that the religion he professed was the true religion, and he a true prophet, and that all his prophecies would be exactly fulfilled.

CHAPTER - INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 18

n this chapter Elijah has an order from the Lord to show himself to Ahab, who, going first, and meeting with a servant of his, Obadiah, charges him to tell his master where he was, that he might meet him, (1 Kings 18:1-16), and, upon meeting him, desires that all Israel, and the prophets of Baal, might be convened, which was accordingly done, (1 Kings 18:17-20), when he expostulated with the people of Israel for their idolatry, mocked and confounded the prophets of Baal, and gave the strongest proofs, to the conviction of the people, that Jehovah is the true God, (Kings 18:21-39), on which all the prophets of Baal were slain, (1 Kings 18:40), and rain in great abundance was given at the prayer of the prophet, (1 Kings 18:41-46).

Ver. 1 . And it came to pass after many days , etc.] When two years and more were gone from the time the drought and famine began; or rather

from the time of the prophets departure to the brook Cherith, which might be six months after the famine began: that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year ; of his absence from Ahab: saying, go show thyself unto Ahab ; whom he had not seen so long, and who had been seeking for him, but to no purpose: and I will send rain upon the earth ; the term of three years and six months being almost expired, (see James 5:17).

Ver. 2 . And Elijah went to show himself unto Ahab , etc.] Which showed his cheerful and ready obedience to the will of God, and his great courage and magnanimity, to face a king enraged against him, and that sought his life: and there was a sore famine in Samaria ; the metropolis of the kingdom, where Ahab kept his court, and therefore must be sensible of it, and bore the greater indignation against the prophet who had foretold it. Ver. 3 . And Ahab called Obadiah, which was the governor of his house , etc.] Perhaps his steward: the Jews take him to be Obadiah the prophet, who wrote the small prophecy that goes by his name: (now Obadiah feared the Lord greatly:) who, though he did not go up to Jerusalem to worship, which ceremonial service was dispensed with in him, yet he did not worship the calves, nor Baal, but served the Lord in a spiritual manner.

Ver. 4 . For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord , etc.] Or slew them, as the Targum; put them to death some way or another; such as were brought up in the schools of the prophets, trained up in religious exercises, and instructed others therein: that Obadiah took one hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave ; fifty in one cave and fifty in another; for there were large caves in the land of Israel capable of holding such a number, and many more, (see <092201> Samuel 22:1 24:3) and fed them with bread and water; which in this time of famine were very acceptable; though these may be put for all the necessities of life.

Ver. 5 . And Ahab said unto Obadiah, go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks , etc.] To observe in what condition they were, and the places adjoining to them, the meadows and valleys: peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive ; particularly those which belonged to the king's stables, to find provisions for which it was found difficult: that we lose not all the beasts ; many of them, doubtless, were lost through the drought already, and there was great danger of the rest, and so, in time, of there being none to procreate and preserve their species, and to prevent which Ahab proposed to take this method.

Ver. 6 . So they divided the land between them, to pass through it , etc.] And one took one part, and the other the other part: Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself ; Ahab not caring to trust any but Obadiah, who he knew was a faithful man, lest they should be bribed by those that had grass not to discover it.

Ver. 7 . And as Obadiah was in the way , etc.] In his district, making his observations: behold, Elijah met him : where is not said; but he was, no doubt, upon the road from Zarephath to Samaria: and he knew him that is, Obadiah knew Elijah, having seen him at Ahab's court before he absconded: and fell on his face, and said, art thou that my lord Elijah? thus doing him honour and reverence both by words and gesture, as being an extraordinary prophet of the Lord.

Ver. 8 . And he answered him, I am , etc.] He did not desire to be concealed, his orders were to show and make himself known to Ahab, and Obadiah was one of his domestic servants: go tell thy lord, behold, Elijah is here ; in such a place, ready to face him at any time. Elijah, by calling Ahab the lord of Obadiah, as he tacitly reproves him for calling him lord, shows reverence to Ahab as a king, and yet that he was fearless of him, as he was the prophet and ambassador of the Lord of hosts to him.

Ver. 9 . And he said, what have I sinned , etc.] Or in what have I offended God or his prophet, that revenge should be taken on me in this way: that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab to slay me ? for that he supposed would be the consequence of it, as he argues and more plainly expresses his sense in the following words.

Ver. 10 . As the Lord thy God liveth , etc.] Which is the form of an oath he thought fit to make, to ascertain the truth of what he was about to say: there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee ; which is either an hyperbolical expression, signifying he had sought for him in many places, and in every place he could think of; or it must be understood either of the ten tribes, which were as so many nations and kingdoms as they had been; or were more in the times of the Canaanites; or of the nations round about, that were in alliance with or tributary to the king of Israel: and when they said, he is not there, he took an oath of the kingdom and nation that they found thee not ; which he might exact of his own subjects, but could not of other nations, unless they were free

to it of themselves; or he might take it of their ambassadors or merchants that came into his land, of whom he inquired, and adjured them to tell him the truth. Ver. 11 . And now thou sayest, go tell thy lord, behold, Elijah is here .] Which, if I should not be able to make good, would be of fatal consequence to me; and that it is plain he feared, by what he next says.

Ver. 12 . And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not , etc.] This he supposed might possibly, and very probably, be the case, since small raptures might have been already, and known to Obadiah, as there were afterwards, (see 2 Kings 2:16 Ezekiel 3:12,14 Acts 8:39), and then he should not know where he was, nor be able to direct his master where to find him: and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me ; for telling him a lie, and deceiving and mocking him; or for not seizing on Elijah, and bringing him, when he knew he was so desirous of getting him into his hands: but I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth ; and therefore did not deserve to be treated after this manner, having been an early and conscientious worshipper of the true God.

Ver. 13 . Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord? how I hid one hundred men of the Lord's prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water ?] (see Gill on " 1 Kings 18:4"), this he said not in a way of ostentation, but to show that it would be very ungenerous and ungrateful, as well as impolitic, to sacrifice such a friend at court to the Lord's prophets as he had been, and might still continue to be.

Ver. 14 . And now thou sayest, go tell my lord, behold, Elijah [is here]: and he shall slay me .] That is, should he carry such a message to him, and Elijah should be removed elsewhere, and not to be found.

Ver. 15 . And Elijah said, as the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand , etc.] In whose presence he was, and whose prophet and minister he was; he takes this oath, to assure Obadiah that he would certainly be upon the spot, or to be found, and not expose him to any danger: I will surely show myself unto him today ; he was determined at all events to present himself to him that day. Ver. 16 . So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him , etc.] That Elijah was in such a place, and had desired him to inform him of it, and was ready to appear before him that day wherever he pleased; for upon the prophet's oath Obadiah was entirely satisfied, and

was in no fear of delivering the message: and Ahab went to meet Elijah ; though perhaps the bold message of the prophet might make him fear he had something to say to him not very agreeable.

Ver. 17 . And it came to pass when Ahab saw Elijah , etc.] As soon as he came up to him, and knew who he was; Abarbinel thinks, because his hair was grown so long that Ahab did not know him certainly, and therefore put the following question: that Ahab said unto him, art thou he that troubleth Israel ? by opposing the religion of Baal, which prevailed among them; but chiefly rain being withheld from them according to his word, and at his prayer.

Ver. 18 . And he answered , etc.] That is, Elijah, with great boldness and undaunted courage, not fearing the face of the king, being sent to show himself to him in the name of the King of kings: I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house ; they, by their sins, were the cause of all the troubles, those sore evil and sad calamities that were upon them: in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord : to have no other gods before him, and not to make images, and worship them, which they had done: and thou hast followed Baalim ; the several Baals, the Sun, moon, and stars, the whole host of heaven, worshipped under this name; or, not content with the Phoenician Baal, or Baal of the Zidonians, followed others, (see Judges 2:11).

Ver. 19 . Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto Mount Carmel . etc.] No doubt but more discourse passed between Ahab and Elijah, though not recorded, before he made this motion to him; it is very probable, that after some dispute between them, who was the true God, and about idolatry, as the cause of want of rain, Elijah proposed to the king what he afterwards did to the people, to which he could not object; and being desirous of gratifying his curiosity, and especially of having rain, which the prophet might promise him in the issue of this affair, he agreed unto it; and therefore Elijah desired that all Israel might be convened, that it might be openly and publicly done, and to the conviction and reformation of them, which was what was chiefly designed; and he chose Carmel, a mountain in the tribe of Issachar, well situated for the people that came from all parts; and the rather this than Samaria, that he might meet with no obstruction from Jezebel, and from whence: he might be able to see the rain when coming, as he did. Of this mountain, (see Gill on " Jeremiah 46:18"), to which may be added, the description of it by Mr.

Sandys f385 . “Mount Carmel stretcheth from east to west, and hath its uttermost basis washed with the sea; steepest towards the north, and of an indifferent altitude; rich in vines and olives when farmed, and abounding with several sorts of fruits and herbs, both medicinal and fragrant, though now much overgrown with woods and shrubs of sweet savour.”

From the following solemn transaction at it, it seems in later times, to have become sacred, and was very venerable with the Heathens; from this mountain, a deity with them had the name of Carmel, and was worshipped here, without an image or a temple, only had an altar erected for it, in imitation of the God of Israel, worshipped here in like manner; here Vespasian sacrificed to this deity, assisted by the priest of it, Basilides, as Tacitus relates; Suetonius also makes mention of this deity, and of Vespasian’s consulting its oracle, which gave him hopes of obtaining the empire; and from hence, in Popish times, there were an order of friars called Carmelites, instituted in the year 1180, pretending to be the successors of the children of the prophets Elijah left there: and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty ; who are supposed to be dispersed in the various parts of the kingdom, to teach and practise the worship of Baal, and encourage and spread it in the nation: and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel’s table ; for it seems there were now more groves than that one Ahab first made, (1 Kings 16:33), for which such numbers were appointed to attend, and which, perhaps, were near Samaria, since they ate at Jezebel’s table, and were a sort of domestic chaplains of her’s. “Asheroth”, we render “groves”, the learned Selden takes to be Ashtoreth, or Ashtareth, or Astarte, the goddess of the Zidonians, for whom, and so for these prophets, Jezebel might have a peculiar respect, (see 1 Kings 11:5).

Ver. 20 . So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel , etc.] By messengers, requiring their attendance at Mount Carmel at such a time, at least their chief and principal men: and gathered the prophets together unto Mount Carmel ; the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, but not the four hundred prophets of the groves; for of them we have no account afterwards, only of the former; it may be they were not at the command of Ahab, only of Jezebel, at whose table they ate, who would not suffer them to go.

Ver. 21 . And Elijah came unto all the people , etc.] Assembled at Mount Carmel: and said, how long halt ye between two opinions ?

sometimes inclining to the one, and sometimes to the other: as a lame man in walking, his body moves sometimes to one side, and sometimes to another; or “leap ye upon two branches” f389 , like a bird that leaps or hops from one branch to another, and never settles long; or rather it denotes the confusion of their thoughts, being like branches of trees twisted and implicated; thus upbraiding them with their inconstancy and fickleness; what their two opinions were, may be learnt from the next clause: if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him ; for there is but one God, one infinite, immense, and incomprehensible being; one that is omnipotent, all sufficient, good, and perfect; there cannot be more, and therefore but one to be followed, served, and worshipped: and the people answered him not a word : through conviction and confusion, his reasoning being unanswerable; or not knowing which to choose at present; or fearing they should be drawn into a snare, should they name any; either incur the displeasure of the king, who was for Baal, or of the prophet, who was for the Lord, at whose word rain was withheld, and might be given, which they were desirous of.

Ver. 22 . Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only remain a prophet of the Lord , etc.] At least as he thought, all the rest being slain, as he supposed; however there were none present but himself: but Baal’s prophets are four hundred and fifty men ; which were very great odds he had to contend with.

Ver. 23 . Let them therefore give us two bullocks , etc.] Who, being so many, were better able to be at the expense of them, and having the king on their party too; though perhaps no more is meant than that two bullocks should be brought thither, and presented before them: and let them choose one bullock for themselves ; which of the two they would, if they thought one was any ways preferable to the other, it was at their option to take it: and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood ; as sacrifices usually were: and put no fire under ; which was wont to be done for burnt offerings, as this was designed to be: and I will dress the other bullock ; by slaying and cutting it in pieces; and lay it on wood : as for a burnt offering: and put no fire under ; to consume it.

Ver. 24 . And call ye on the name of your gods , etc.] The Baalim, the many lords and gods they served: and I will call on the name of the Lord ; the one true Jehovah and God of Israel, whom I serve: and the God that answereth by fire ; by causing fire to come down upon the sacrifice, and

consume it: let him be God ; accounted, owned, and acknowledged as the true God, and so afterwards worshipped as such: and all the people answered and said, it is well spoken ; they thought it a very reasonable proposal, a very good method to determine the controversy, and come at the truth, and know who was the true God, and who not.

Ver. 25 . And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal , etc.] Who agreed to this proposal, though not expressed; or they signified it by their silence.

Ben Gersom thinks they agreed to it, because that, according to their belief, Baal was Mars, and in the sign of Aries, one of the fiery planets, and therefore fancied he could send down fire on their sacrifice; but Abarbinel is of opinion that it was the sun they worshipped, under the name of Baal, the great luminary which presides over the element of fire, and therefore had power to cause it to descend; and if not, they agreed to it, he thinks, for three reasons; one was necessity, they could not refuse, after the people had approved of it, lest they should rise upon them, and stone them; and another was, that Elijah proposed to offer without the temple, contrary to the law of his God, and therefore concluded he would not answer him by fire, and so they should be upon a par with him; and the third was, that they thought they should offer their bullocks together, so that, if fire descended, it would come upon them both, and then the dispute would be, whether his God, or their god, sent it; and so no proof could be made who was God, nor the matter in controversy decided: choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many ; therefore in civility to them gave the choice of the bullock and the altar first, he being one and they many: and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under ; under the wood on which was the sacrifice cut in pieces; and when they had so done, then they were to call on their gods to cause fire to descend upon it.

Ver. 26 . And they took the bullock which was given them , etc.] By such of them as made the choice: and they dressed it ; slew it, and cut it in pieces, and laid it on the wood, but put no fire under it: and called on the name of Baal, from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us ; and send fire down on the sacrifice; and if the sun was their Baal, they might hope, as the heat he gradually diffused was at its height at noon, that some flashes of fire would proceed from it to consume their sacrifice; but after, their hope was turned into despair, they became and acted like madmen: but there was no voice, nor any that answered ; by word, or by sending

down fire as they desired: and they leapt upon the altar which was made ; not by Elijah, but by themselves, either now or heretofore, and where they had formerly sacrificed; and they danced about it, and leaped on it, either according to a custom used by them; such as the Sali, the priests of Mars, used, so called from their leaping, because they did their sacred things leaping, and went about their altars capering and leaping f390 ; or rather they were mad on it, as the Targum renders it, and acted like madmen, as if they were agitated by a prophetic fury and frenzy.

Ver. 27 . And it came to pass at noon , etc.] When they had been from the time of the morning sacrifice until now invoking their deity to no purpose: that Elijah mocked them ; he jeered and bantered them: and said, cry aloud ; your god does not hear you; perhaps, if you raise your voice higher, he may; for he is a god ; according to your esteem of him, and, if so, he surely may hear you: unless either he is talking ; with others about matters of moment and importance, who are waiting on him with their applications to him; or he is in meditation; in a deep study upon some things difficult to be resolved: or he is pursuing ; his studies, or his pleasures, or his enemies, to overtake them; or he is employed on business f391 : or he is in a journey ; gone to visit his friends, or some parts of his dominions; so Homer represents Jupiter gone to pay a visit to the Ethiopians, and as yesterday gone to a feast, and all the gods following him, from whence he would not return until twelve days; and in like manner Lucian speaks of the gods, mocking at them: or, peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked ; with a loud crying to him: it being now noon, Abarbinel thinks this refers to a custom of sleeping after dinner; Homer also speaks of the sleep of the gods, and which used to be at noon; and therefore the worshippers of Baal ceased then to call upon him; and it is said f395 , the Heathens feared to go into the temples of their gods at noon, lest they should disturb them; but such is not the true God, the God of Israel, he neither slumbers nor sleeps, (<19C104> Psalm 121:4).

Ver. 28 . And they cried aloud , etc.] Trying to make him hear, if possible: and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them ; so the priests of Heathen deities used to slash themselves on their shoulders, arms, and thighs, in their devotions to them, as many writers observe f396 , fancying their gods were delighted with human blood; particularly the priests of Bellona f397 , and the worshippers of the Syrian goddess f398 , and of the Egyptian Isis f399 .

Ver. 29 . And it came to pass when midday was past , etc.] And nothing done, no fire descended: and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice ; continued praying to Baal, and singing his praises, but all to no purpose; or they behaved like madmen, as the Targum; thus they went on until it was time to offer the evening sacrifice; so that they had no interruption in their service, and had all the time they could desire to have to importune their god to do the favour for them they requested: that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded ; no voice was heard that returned them any answer; nor was any answer made by fire, nor any regard shown to their mad gestures, and barbarous actions; and very likely the people also, by this time, paid no regard unto them, perceiving they were not able, by all their cries and methods they took, to obtain an answer.

Ver. 30 . And Elijah said unto all the people, come near unto me , etc.] And observe what I do, and what will be done at my request: and all the people came near unto him ; left the prophets of Baal to themselves, and took no more notice of them, but attended to what the prophet should say and do: and he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down ; which had been set up when high places and altars were allowed of, while the tabernacle was unsettled, and the temple not built; this is supposed to have been erected in the times of the judges; though, according to a tradition of the Jews f400 , it was built by Saul, (see 1 Samuel 15:12) but had been thrown down by the idolatrous Israelites, who demolished such as were erected to the name of the Lord everywhere, and built new ones for their idols, (1 Kings 19:10). Benjamin of Tudela says, that on the top of Mount Carmel is now to be seen the place of the altar Elijah repaired, which is four cubits round.

Ver. 31 . And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob , etc.] Which he might very easily come at from the mountain: unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, Israel shall be thy name , which signifies one that has power with God, as Jacob had, when the word came to him to make a change in his name at Peniel, (Genesis 32:28), and as Elijah hoped and believed he should have at this time, being a prophet, and a worshipper of Israel's God.

Ver. 32 . And with the stones he built an altar in the same of the Lord , etc.] Whom the twelve tribes had formerly worshipped; and though now divided in their civil state, yet ought to be united in the worship of

God: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed ; or two seahs, one of which was the third part of an ephah, and two of them were more than half a bushel; and this trench or ditch round the altar was as broad as such a measure of seed would sow.

Ver. 33 . And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood , etc.] Just in such manner as sacrifices usually were: and said, fill four barrels with water ; either from the brook Kishon, or, if that was dried up, from the sea; for both were near this mountain, and so to be had, though a time of drought: and pour it on the burnt sacrifice ; that which was intended to be one: and upon the wood : wherewith it was to be burnt, and so made unfit for it; and which would make the miracle appear the greater, when fire came down and consumed it.

Ver. 34 . And he said, do it the second time, and they did it the second time , etc.] That is, poured four barrels of water more upon the wood: and he said, do it the third time, and they did it the third time ; so that there were in all twelve barrels of water poured on the wood, agreeably to the number of the twelve stones the altar was built with, and may have respect to the same as they.

Ver. 35 . And the water ran round about the altar , etc.] There being such a large effusion of it on it; and he filled the trench also with water ; which surrounded the altar, so that it seemed impracticable that any fire should kindle upon it; and this gave full proof and demonstration there could be no collusion in this matter. Ver. 36 . And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice , etc.] Which the people of God at Jerusalem were now attending to: that Elijah the prophet came near ; to the altar he had built, and on which he had laid the sacrifice: and said ; in prayer to God: Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ; the covenant God of the ancestors of his people, though they had now so fully departed from him: let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel ; and that there is no other: and that I am thy servant ; a true worshipper of him, and his faithful prophet and minister: and that I have done all these things at thy word ; restrained rain from the earth for some years past, and now had convened Israel, and the false prophets, together, that by a visible sign from heaven it might be known who was the true God; all which he did not of himself, but by the impulse, direction, and, commandment of the Lord.

Ver. 37 . Hear me, O Lord, hear me ; etc.] Which repetition is made

to express his importunity, and the vehement earnest desire of his soul to be heard in such a case, which so much concerned the glory of God; the Targum is, “receive my prayer, O Lord, concerning the fire, receive my prayer concerning the rain;” as if the one respected the sending down the fire on the sacrifice, and the other sending rain on the earth; and which sense is followed by other Jewish writers: that this people may know that thou art the Lord God ; and not Baal, or any other idol: and that thou hast turned their heart back again ; from idolatry, to the worship of the true God; though some understand this of God’s giving them up to a spirit of error, and suffering them to fall into idolatry, and hardening their hearts, as he did Pharaoh’s; but the former sense is best. Ver. 38 . Then the fire of the Lord fell , etc.] An extraordinary fire from God out of heaven, as the effects of it show: and consumed the burnt sacrifice ; as it had done in former instances, (Leviticus 9:24 Judges 6:21 1 Chronicles 21:26 2 Chronicles 7:1,3), and besides this, which is still more extraordinary, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust ; of the altar, thereby signifying that even such were not to be used any more: and licked up the water that was in the trench ; around the altar, (see Kings 18:32).

Ver. 39 . And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces , etc.] In reverence of God, astonished at the miracle wrought, ashamed of themselves and their sins, particularly their idolatry, that they should turn their backs on the true God, and follow idols: and they said, the Lord, he is the God, the Lord, he is the God ; which acknowledgment of God, as the true God, in opposition to Baal, is repeated, to show their firm belief and strong assurance of it.

Ver. 40 . And Elijah said unto them, take the prophets of Baal , etc.] The four hundred and fifty that were upon the spot; for the number of the people of Israel, now gathered together, were equal to it; nor was it in Ahab’s power to hinder it, and he might himself be so far surprised and convicted as not in the least to object to it: let not one of them escape : that there might be none of them left to seduce the people any more: and they took them ; laid hold on them, everyone of them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon ; which ran by the side, and at the bottom of Mount Carmel, into the sea; (see Gill on “ Judges 4:7”) (see Gill on “ Judges 5:21”). and slew them there ; intimating, that it was owing to the idolatry they led the people into that rain had been withheld, and the brooks were dried up, as this might be; or, as Ben Gersom thinks, that the land might not be defiled with their blood, but be carried down the river after it:

these he slew not with his own hand, but by others he gave orders to do it; and this not as a private person, but as an extraordinary minister of God, to execute justice according to his law, (Deuteronomy 13:1) by which law such false prophets were to die; and the rather he was raised up and spirited for this service, as the supreme magistrate was addicted to idolatry himself.

Ver. 41 . And Elijah said unto Ahab, get thee up , etc.] From the brook and valley where the execution of the prophets had been made; either up to his chariot, or to the tent or pavilion erected on the side of the mount, where the whole scene of things was transacted; eat and drink ; which he had no leisure for all the day, from the time of the morning sacrifice to the evening sacrifice, which was taken up in attending to the issue of the several sacrifices; but now he is bid to eat and refresh himself, and that in token of joy and gladness, as became him, both for the honour of the true God, which had been abundantly confirmed, and for the near approach of rain, of which he assures him: for there is a sound of abundance of rain ; the wind perhaps began to rise, and blow pretty briskly, which was a sign of it f402 ; besides, according to the Tyrian annals f403 , there were loud claps of thunder at this time, at least when the heavens became very black, as in (1 Kings 18:45).

Ver. 42 . So Ahab went up to eat and to drink , etc.] Up to his chariot, as some think, or rather to some place higher than that in which he now was: and Elijah went up to the top of Carmel ; higher still, where he both might be alone, and have the opportunity of observing the clouds gathering, and the rain coming: and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees ; expressive of his humility, and of his earnestness, and vehement desire, and continued importunity, that rain might fall; for this was a posture of prayer he put himself into, and continued in; and it is certain that it was through his prayer that rain came, (James 5:18) and from hence came the fable of the Grecians concerning Aeacus praying for rain in a time of drought, when it came f404 . So the Chinese writers report that at the prayers of their emperor Tangus, after a seven years' drought, great rains fell.

Ver. 43 . And said to his servant , etc.] Whom some take to be the son of the widow of Sarepta, but he must be too young to be employed in such service as this was: go up now ; still higher on Mount Carmel; than where he was, even to the highest point of it: look towards the sea : or the west,

as the Targum, the Mediterranean sea, which lay to the west of the land of Israel: and he went up and looked, and he said, there is nothing ; there was nothing in the sky, or arising out of the sea, that looked like or foreboded rain: and he said, go again seven times ; till he should see something.

Ver. 44 . And it came to pass at the seventh time that he said, behold there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand , etc.] Either about the size or in the form of it; rain water comes out of the sea, and, being strained through the clouds and air, becomes fresh: and he said, go up : the meaning seems to be, that he should first go down from the mount, and then go up to that part of it where Ahab was: say unto Ahab, prepare thy chariot ; bind or fasten the horses to it, as the phrase seems to signify: and get thee down ; from the mountain where he was, to go to Jezreel, which lay low in a valley: that the rain stop thee not ; on the road, that might be made impassable by it, signifying that such abundance should fall as would make it so.

Ver. 45 . And it came to pass in the mean while , etc.] That the servant was gone with the message to Ahab, and Ahab was getting ready his chariot: that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain ; which all sprung from the cloud like a man's hand; and so we are told f406 , that sometimes a little cloud called the ox's eye is seen on a mount of the Cape of Good Hope, called Tafesbery, when the sky is most serene, and the sea quiet; which is at first scarce so big as a barley corn, and then as a walnut; and presently it extends itself over the whole surface of the mountain: and Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel ; as fast as he could.

Ver. 46 . And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah , etc.] Giving him more than common strength of body, as well as courage and fortitude of mind; so the Targum, the spirit of strength from the Lord was with him: and he girded up his loins ; gathered up his long loose garment, and girt it about him, that he might be more fit for travelling; and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel ; reckoned about sixteen miles from Carmel f407 ; this showed his humility, that he was not elated with the wonderful things God had done by him, and that he bore no ill will to Ahab, but was ready to show him all honour and respect due to him as a king; and that it were his sins, and not his person, he had an aversion to; and that he was not afraid of Jezebel, and her prophets, but entered into the city where she was, to instruct the people, and warn them against her idolatries; though some think he went no further than the gate of the city, prudently avoiding falling into her hands.

CHAPTER - INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 19

This chapter gives us a further account of Elijah, of his being obliged to flee for his life through the threats of Jezebel, (1 Kings 19:1-4), of the care the Lord took of him, providing food for him, in the strength of which he went to Horeb, (1 Kings 19:5-8), of the Lord's appearance to him there, and conversation with him, (1 Kings 19:9-14), of some instructions he gave him to anoint a king over Syria, another over Israel, and a prophet in his room, (1 Kings 19:15-18), and of his finding Elisha, and throwing his mantle over him, who left his secular employment, and followed him, and became his servant, (1 Kings 19:19-21).

Ver. 1 . And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done , etc.] What miracles he had wrought, how that not only fire came down from heaven, and consumed the sacrifice, but even the stones and dust of the altar, and licked up great quantities of water in the trench around it; and that it was at his prayer that rain came down from heaven in such abundance, of which she was sensible; by all which he got the people on his side, so that it was not in his power to seize him and slay him; and this he said to clear himself, and make her easy: and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword ; the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal he had gathered to Carmel; the Targum calls them false prophets, but Ahab would scarcely use that epithet to Jezebel; as for the four hundred prophets of the grove, they were not present, and so not included. Jezebel knew they were safe, being with her, she not suffering them to go to Carmel.

Ver. 2 . Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah , etc.] In Jezreel, or near it, to frighten him away; not caring to seize him, and dispatch him, for fear of the people, in whom he had now a great interest; or otherwise it is not easy to account for it that she should give him notice of it; unless she scorned to do it privately, as some think, and was determined to make a public example of him; but being not as yet prepared for it, sends him word what he must expect, imagining that as he had the courage to appear, he would not flee; no doubt there was an hand of Providence in it, be it which it will, that he might have time to make his escape: saying, so let the gods do to me, and more also ; the gods she served, Baal and Ashtaroth, and by whom she swore: if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time ; as one of the prophets Elijah had slain; she swore by her gods, and wished the greatest evils might befall her, if she

did not lodge him in the state of the dead where they were in the space of twenty four hours; though Abarbinel thinks it is not an oath, but that the words and meaning of them are, so the gods do; it is their usual way, and they will go on to do so for the future, because of the holiness of their name; and therefore do not boast of slaying the prophets, or make use of that as an argument of their falsehood, for they will do the same by thee by tomorrow this time.

Ver. 3 . And when he saw that , etc.] That her design and resolution were to take away his life; the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions read, “and he was afraid”; or frightened; he that had such courage as not to be afraid to meet Ahab, and contend with four hundred and fifty priests of Baal, and in the face of all Israel, who at first were not inclined to take his part, is now terrified at the threats of a single woman; which shows that the spirit and courage he had before were of the Lord, and not of himself; and that those who have the greatest zeal and courage for religion, for God, and his worship, his truths and ordinances, if left to themselves, become weak and timorous; and whether this is the true reading, or not, it was certainly his case by what follows: he arose and went for his life ; fled to save his life, at a time when he was much wanted to encourage and increase the reformation from idolatry, and to preserve the people from relapsing who were converted; and through the miracles that had been wrought by him, and for him, he had great reason to trust in the Lord: or “he went unto”, or “according to his own soul” f408 ; according to his own mind and will, not taking counsel of God, or any direction from him; and so Abarbinel interprets it: and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah ; to the tribe of Judah; for though it was in the inheritance of Simeon, yet that was within the tribe of Judah, (Joshua 19:1,2), or to the kingdom of Judah, over which Jehoshaphat reigned, and so might think himself safe, being out of the dominions of Ahab, and reach of Jezebel; but yet he did not think so, his fears ran so high that he imagined she would send some after him to search for him, and slay him privately, or make interest with Jehoshaphat to deliver him up, there being friendship between him and Ahab; for though this place was eighty four miles from Jezreel, as Bunting computes it, he left it: and left his servant there ; he took him not with him, either lest he should betray him, or rather out of compassion to him, that he might not share in the miseries of life that were like to come upon him.

Ver. 4 . But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness , etc.] Of Paran, which began near Beersheba, and was the wilderness of

Arabia, in which the Israelites were near forty years; this day's journey carried him about twenty miles from Beersheba southward, as the above writer reckons: and came and sat down under a juniper tree ; Abarbinel supposes that Elijah chose to sit under this tree, to preserve him from venomous creatures, which naturalists say will not come near it; and Pliny indeed observes, that it being burnt will drive away serpents, and that some persons anoint themselves with the oil of it, for fear of them; and yet Virgil represents the shade of a juniper tree as noxious; hence some interpreters take this to be a piece of carelessness and indifference of the prophet's, where he sat: and he requested for himself that he might die ; for though he fled from Jezebel to preserve his life, not choosing to die by her hands, which would cause her prophets to exult and triumph, yet was now desirous of dying by the hand of the Lord, and in a place where his death would not be known: [it is] enough, now, O Lord, take away my life ; intimating that he had lived long enough, even as long as he desired; and he had done as much work for God as he thought he had to do; he supposed his service and usefulness were at an end, and therefore desired his dismissal: for [I am not] better than my fathers that he should not die, or live longer than they; but this desire was not like that of the Apostle Paul's, but like that of Job and of Jonah; not so much to be with God and Christ, as to be rid of the troubles of life. Ver. 5 . And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree , etc.] Being weary and fatigued with his journey, the same under which he sat; for there was but one, as that is said to be in the preceding verse: behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, arise, and eat ; so far was the Lord from granting his request to take away his life, that he made provision to preserve it; so careful was he of him, as to give an angel charge to get food ready for him, and then awake him to eat of it.

Ver. 6 . And he looked, and, behold, [there was] a cake baked on the coals , etc.] Just took off the coals, quite hot. Bochart thinks it should be rendered, "baked on hot stones"; and such was the way of baking cakes in some of the eastern countries, (see Gill on " Genesis 18:6"), the stones hereabout might be heated by a supernatural power, and the cake baked on them by an angel; these sort of cakes are in Hebrew called "huggoth", as some pronounce the word, and are said to be now common in Bulgaria, where they are called "hugaces" f413 : and a cruse of water at his head ; to drink of in eating the cake; which cruse or pot a learned man thinks was Elijah's, not brought by the angel, only water put into it by him; (see 1 Samuel 26:11), and he did eat and drink; but not all that was set before

him: and laid him down again ; to take some more sleep for his greater refreshment.

Ver. 7 . And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him , etc.] In order to awake him out of sleep: and said unto him, arise, and eat, because the journey is too great for thee ; which he had to go to Horeb, without eating more than he had; and there were no provisions to be had in a common way and manner in his road thither.

Ver. 8 . And he arose, and did eat and drink , etc.] Of what was left of the cake and cruse of water, before provided for him: and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God ; for so long he was going to that place, though it might have been gone in three or four days; but he went in byways, and wandered about in the wilderness, as the Israelites did, and that for the space of forty days, as they did near forty years; and all this while he had no other sustenance than what he had taken under the juniper tree, from whence he set out, which must be supernatural; for it is said f415 , a man cannot live without food beyond seven days, (see Gill on “ Exodus 24:18”) the food either staying in his stomach all this while, or however the nutritive virtue of it, by which he was supported, and held out till he came to Horeb or Sinai; called the mount of the Lord, because here he had appeared to Moses in the bush, and from hence gave the law to the children of Israel. Abarbinel is of opinion that this term of forty days was consumed in his whole journey to Horeb, his stay there, and return to the land of Israel.

Ver. 9 . And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there , etc.] This cave, some travellers say f416 , is to be seen at this day, not far from a church dedicated to the prophet Elijah, and that the cave itself has the appearance of a chapel; but a more particular account of it is given in a journal f417 lately published, which says, this cave exists to this very day, and is situated at the foot of Mount Sinai, and is now enclosed in a church built of red and white granite marble, the entrance into which is from the west; the dimensions of this cave are in length five feet, in depth four feet, and in height four and a half. The Jewish writers are of opinion that this was the cleft of the rock in which Moses was put, when the Lord passed before him; but, if so, there would have been no need of Elijah to have gone forth to and stand upon the mount when the Lord passed by, (1 Kings 19:11), and, behold, the word of the Lord came to him ; an articulate voice was heard by him: and he said unto him, what dost thou here, Elijah ? this

is not a proper place for a prophet to be in, in a wilderness, in a mountain, in a cave in it: what work could he do for God? or what service to his people? in the land of Israel he might bear his testimony against idolatry, and so be a means of reclaiming backsliders, and of establishing those that were in the true religion; but of what usefulness could he be here? Abarbinel takes it to be a reproof of Elijah, for going into a place so holy as it was, and in which Moses, the chief of the prophets, had been, and that it did not become such a man as he was to be in such a place.

Ver. 10 . And he said, I have been jealous for the Lord God of hosts , etc.] Through zeal for the glory of God he had slain four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and this had stirred up the malice and revenge of Jezebel against him, who sought his life, and which had obliged him to flee, and come to this place for shelter; this is the first part of his answer, others follow: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant ; the law, especially the two first commandments delivered in this very place; and therefore he could hope for no protection from them, but was forced to leave his country: thrown down thy altars : which had been built in times past for the worship of God, to sacrifice thereon to him, but were now demolished, that those that would not bow the knee to Baal, and could not go to Jerusalem, might make no use of them: and slain thy prophets with the sword ; which was done by Jezebel, the Israelites conniving at it, and consenting to it, and not daring to oppose her; slain all she had knowledge of, or even were known by the prophet: hence it follows, and I, [even] I only am left, and they seek my life to take it away : all this Elijah said, as it seems, not only to excuse himself for fleeing, and taking up his abode where he was, but to stir up the indignation of God against Israel for their idolatries and murders, and to put him upon inflicting his judgments on them for the same.

Ver. 11 . And he said, go forth and stand upon the mount before the Lord , etc.] Who would appear there as he had to Moses formerly, though not in the same manner: and, behold, the Lord passed by ; or was about to pass, for as yet he had not; his messengers first went before him: and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord ; strong enough to do all this, and so it might: but the Lord was not in the wind ; as he sometimes is, (Na 1:3), he spake to Job out of a whirlwind, (Job 38:1), and after the wind an earthquake ; that shook the earth all around, and the mountain also, as it did when the law was given on it, (Psalm 68:8) but the Lord was not in the earthquake ; as he was

when it trembled in the times of Moses, (Exodus 19:18). Ver. 12 . And after the earthquake a fire, [but] the Lord was not in the fire , etc.] As he was when he descended on this mount, and spake to Moses, (Exodus 19:1-25), the Targum, and so Jarchi, interpret all these appearances of angels, and not amiss; the wind, of an host of angels of wind; the earthquake, of an host of angels of commotion; the fire, of an host of angels of fire; (see <19A404> Psalm 104:4), these ministers of the Lord went before him, to prepare the way of his glorious Majesty; which emblems may represent the power of God, the terribleness of his majesty, and the fury of his wrath, which he could display, if he would, to the destruction of his enemies; and could as easily destroy the idolatrous kingdom of Israel, which Elijah seems to be solicitous of, as the wind rent the mountains, and broke the rocks, and the earthquake shook the earth, and the fire consumed all in its way; but he chose not to do it now, but to use lenity, and show mercy, signified by the next emblem: and after the fire a still small voice : not rough, but gentle, more like whispering than roaring; something soft, easy, and musical; the Targum is, the voice of those that praise God in silence; and all this may be considered as showing the difference between the two dispensations of law and Gospel; the law is a voice of terrible words, and was given amidst a tempest of wind, thunder, and lightning, attended with an earthquake, (Hebrews 12:18,19 Exodus 19:18), but the Gospel is a gentle voice of love, grace, and mercy, of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by Christ; and may also point at the order and manner of the Lord's dealings with the souls of men, who usually by the law breaks the rocky hearts of men in pieces, shakes their consciences, and fills their minds with a sense of fiery wrath and indignation they deserve, and then speaks comfortably to them, speaks peace and pardon through the ministration of the Gospel by his Spirit; blessed are the people that hear this still, small, gentle voice, the joyful sound, (Psalm 89:15).

Ver. 13 . And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle , etc.] Through reverence of the divine Majesty he perceived was there, and through shame and confusion under a sense of his impurity, imperfections, and unworthiness, as the seraphim in (Isaiah 6:2,3), and as Moses, (Exodus 3:6), and went out and stood in the entering in of the cave; he attempted to come forth out of the cave upon the divine order, (1 Kings 19:11), but was stopped by the terrible appearances of the wind, earthquake, and fire, a little within it; but now he came quite out, and stood at the mouth of it, to hear what the Lord would say unto him: and, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, what dost thou here, Elijah ? the

same question is here put as in (1 Kings 19:9), though there by an angel, here by the Lord himself.

Ver. 14 . And he said , etc.] Elijah, in answer to the question put, and he says the same as before: I have been very jealous , etc.] which the question was designed to draw from him, in order to give him some instructions and directions; which would suggest to him, that though he should not deal severely with Israel, nor with Ahab and his house, yet he would hereafter by the kings he should anoint over Syria and Israel, and by the prophet he should anoint in his room, as instruments of his vengeance.

Ver. 15 . And the Lord said unto him, go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus , etc.] He is bid to go back the way he came, through the wilderness of Arabia, which was part of his way to Damascus, near to which was another wilderness, which took its name from thence; though Fortunatus Schacchus thinks no other is meant by this phrase than returning to his former course and custom of preach the law of God, and reclaiming men from the error of their ways: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria ; it is nowhere related that Elijah did go to Damascus, and anoint Hazael, though it may be he did; however he acquainted Elisha with it, and he declared it to Hazael, that he should be king of Syria, and which perhaps is all that is meant by anointing; that is, that he should be made king, and which was declared by both these prophets, (see 2 Kings 8:13).

Ver. 16 . And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel , etc.] This was a son of Jehoshaphat, and a grandson of Nimshi; nor does he appear to have been anointed by Elijah, but by Elisha; and being done by his order and direction was the same as if it was done by himself, unless he was twice anointed, (see 2 Kings 9:1-3) and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room ; which was in the half tribe of Manasseh, on this side Jordan; (see Gill on “ Judges 7:22”).

Ver. 17 . And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay , etc.] Which suggests that many should be slain in Israel by them both, as were by Hazael, (2 Kings 10:32,33) and by Jehu, (2 Kings 9:24,33 10:1-7), and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay ; which may be understood either literally of the forty two children cursed by him, in consequence of which they were destroyed by

bears, (2 Kings 2:24) or rather figuratively by his prophecies, (see Hosea 6:5) who foretold the slaughters made by Hazael and Jehu, as well as others, (see 2 Kings 8:12 9:7,8), these several things were not done in the order in which they are here put; for what Elisha did was before Hazael and Jehu, and Jehu before Hazael; these words therefore do not respect the exact order of time in which they should be done, only that each should do the part appointed and assigned unto him, and what could not be so well done by the other; thus Hazael was to destroy those that came out to war; and Jehu Ahab's family that did not; and Elisha the children of idolatrous parents at Bethel, that came not within the reach of either; though it may be observed, that Hazael began to distress Israel before Jehu appeared, (2 Kings 8:28,29) and the prophecies of Elisha might not have their full accomplishment until after Hazael and Jehu had done what was appointed for them.

Ver. 18 . Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel , etc.] From perishing by the sword of either of them: all the knees which have not bowed to Baal ; that is, had not worshipped him, which was signified by this gesture: and every mouth which hath not kissed him ; either the image of Baal itself, or the hand, in reverence of him; which rites, one or other, or both, were used by his worshippers; (see Gill on “ Hosea 13:2”). This either refers, as some think, to the present time, and so is an answer to Elijah, who thought he was the only worshipper left with which seems to agree (Romans 11:2-4), or to the times to come, when destruction should be made by the above persons, and when God would have some faithful worshippers, and would take care of them; so some render the words, “I will reserve”, etc. f419 .

Ver. 19 . So he departed thence , etc.] From Mount Horeb, and came to Abelmeholah, which Bunting computes at one hundred and fifty six miles: and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth ; which may be understood either of twelve couple of oxen drawing one plough; which was a large number, but will not seem strange when it is observed, that Abelmeholah, where Elisha was ploughing, lay in the vale of Jordan, which was a clayey stiff ground, and required such a number of oxen to plough it up, especially at the first tilling of it, as this might be f421 ; compare (1 Kings 4:12 7:46) A late traveller observes, that at Damegraed, in upper Egypt on the Nile, six oxen yoked to plough had a great deal of difficulty to turn up the ground; or else, as the Jewish writers generally understand it, there were

twelve ploughs, and a yoke of oxen to each, and a ploughman to attend everyone, and Elisha attended the twelfth; or was with one of the twelve, as the Targum, and might have the oversight of them all; Kimchi thinks, and so Abarbiuel after him, that this signified that he should be leader of the twelve tribes of Israel: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him ; the skirts of it.

Ver. 20 . And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah , etc.] His heart being touched by the Lord at the same time, and his mind enlightened to understand what was meant by that action: and said, let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother ; take his leave of them in this way, which was what was used by friends at parting, (see Ruth 1:9,14) and then I will follow thee ; which he understood was meant by his casting his mantle over him: and he said unto him, go back again ; to his plough: for what have I done to thee ? he had only cast the skirts of his mantle over him, and had said nothing to him; this he said to try him, and get out of him what was in his heart, and how it had been touched by the Spirit of God; and if so, then he suggests it was not what he had done, but what the Lord had impressed upon him, that would oblige him to return, and follow him, after he had taken his leave of his parents.

Ver. 21 . And he returned back from him , etc.] To his father's house, and took his leave, and then came back into the field, perhaps with others accompanying him: and took a yoke of oxen and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen : their yokes, and the plough, with an addition of other things sufficient to boil them: and gave unto the people, and they did eat ; the ploughmen and others that came together on this occasion; he made a feast for them, to express his joy at being called to such service he was: then he arose and went after Elijah ; left his worldly employment, the riches he was heir to, his parents, and his friends, and followed the prophet: and ministered unto him ; became his servant, whereby he attained to great knowledge and understanding of divine things, and was trained up to the prophetic office, which he was invested with upon the removal of Elijah; (see Matthew 8:21,22 19:27).

CHAPTER - INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 20

This chapter relates the siege of Samaria by the king of Syria, and his insolent demand of Ahab's wives, children, and riches, (1 Kings 20:1-12), the sally made out upon him, at the direction of the prophet, and the route

made of the Syrian army, (1 Kings 20:13-21), the return of the Syrian army the next year, when there was a pitched battle between them and Israel, in which the former were entirely defeated, (1 Kings 20:22-30), the peace Ahab made with the king of Syria, (1 Kings 20:31-34), and the reproof one of the sons of the prophets gave him for it, which made him very uneasy, (1 Kings 20:35-43).

Ver. 1 . And Benhadad the king of Syria gathered all his host together , etc.] This was Benhadad the second, the son of that Benhadad, to whom Asa sent to help him against Baasha, (1 Kings 15:18) and there were thirty and two kings with him ; these were heads of families, so called, and at most governors of cities under Benhadad; petty princes, such as were in the land of Canaan in Joshua's time: and horses and chariots ; how many is not said: and he went up and besieged Samaria, and warred against it ; he went up with such an intent, but had not as yet done it in form; what moved him to it cannot be said precisely, whether an ambitious view of enlarging his dominions, or because the king of Israel paid not the tribute his father had imposed upon him, (see 1 Kings 20:34), however, so it was, through the providence of God, as a scourge to Ahab for his impiety.

Ver. 2 . And he sent messengers to Ahab king of Israel, into the city , etc.] Who there remained, and attempted not to go forth and meet him, and stop his progress, though he must have passed great part of his dominions to come to Samaria: and said unto him, thus saith Benhadad ; by them, his messengers, as follows. Ver. 3 . Thy silver and thy gold is mine , etc.] Not of right, but reckoning it as good as in his hands, Ahab not being able to resist him: and thy wives also ; for it seems he had more than Jezebel: and thy children ; which were many, for he had no less than seventy sons, (2 Kings 10:1), even the goodliest are mine : some aggravate this, as if his view was to commit the unnatural sin with his male children, when in his possession.

Ver. 4 . And the king of Israel answered and said, my lord, O king , etc.] So he said to Benhadad's messengers, representing him, as acknowledging his sovereignty over him: according to thy saying, I am thine, and all that I have : which he understood of holding all that he had of him, by giving him homage, and paying him tribute; not that he was to deliver all his substance, and especially his wives and children, into his hands.

Ver. 5 . And the messengers came again , etc.] From Benhadad: and

said, thus speaketh Benhadad, saying, although I have sent unto thee, saying : at the first message: thou shalt deliver me thy silver, and thy gold, and thy wives, and thy children ; into his possession, and not as Ahab understood it, that he should be his vassal, and pay a yearly tribute for his quiet enjoyment of them; yet even this he would not now abide by, growing still more haughty upon the mean submission of Ahab, as by what follows.

Ver. 6 . Yet I will send my servants unto thee tomorrow about this time , etc.] He gave him twenty four hours to consider of it: and they shall search thine house, and the houses of thy servants ; the royal palace, and the houses of the noblemen, and even of every of his subjects in Samaria: and it shall be, that whatsoever is pleasant (or desirable) in thine eyes, they shall put it in, their hand, and take it away ; not be content with what should be given, but search for more; and if any in particular was more desirable to the possessor than anything else, that should be sure to be taken away; which was vastly insolent and aggravating. Ver. 7 . Then the King of Israel called all the elders of the land , etc.] His poor sneaking spirit was a little aroused with the last message, and therefore called a council of the elders of the people upon it, which was a piece of wisdom in him: and said, mark, I pray you, and see how this man seeketh mischief ; nothing less than the entire ruin of the nation: for he sent unto me for my wives, and for my children, and for my silver, and for my gold, and I denied him not ; in the sense he understood him, which was, that he was to be a vassal, and tributary to him, for the sake of holding these, which yet was very mean; but he wanted to have these in hand, and not them only, but the pillaging of all his subjects.

Ver. 8 . And all the elders and all the people said unto him , etc.] They were unanimous in their advice: hearken not [unto him], nor consent ; promising, no doubt, that they would stand by him.

Ver. 9 . Wherefore he sent unto the messengers of Benhadad , etc.] Upon the advice the elders had given him, and encouraged thereby, though in a poor sneaking manner after all: tell my lord the king, all that thou didst send for to thy servant at the first I will do ; owning him as his lord, and himself as his servant, and promising to grant his first demand, though so insolent, in the sense he understood him, of paying tribute to him for it: but this thing I may not do ; to have not only all put into his hands, but his and his servant's houses to be searched and pillaged, because the elders of his people would not agree; and yet he seems to speak as if he himself

would have submitted to it, but was restrained by his council: and the messengers departed, and brought him word again ; reported to Benhadad the answer they received from Ahab.

Ver. 10 . And Benhadad sent unto him, and said , etc.] That is, to Ahab: the gods do so unto me, and more also ; bring greater evils upon me than I can think or express: if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me , signifying that he made no doubt of it of reducing it to dust by numbers of men he should bring with him, which would be so many, that if each was to take an handful of dust of the ruins of Samaria, there would not enough for them all; which was an hectoring and parabolical speech, uttered in his wrath and fury.

Ver. 11 And the king of Israel answered and said , etc.] Very mildly and very wisely: tell him, let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off ; that is, he that prepares for the battle as he that has got the victory; the sense is, let no man triumph before the battle is over and the victory won; the events of war are uncertain; the battle is not always to the strong.

Ver. 12 . And it came to pass, when Benhadad heard this message (as he was drinking, he and the kings in the pavilions) , etc.] Though it was at noon, or before, (1 Kings 20:16), which shows that he and they were addicted to intemperance: that he said unto his servants ; some of the principal officers of his army: set yourselves in array ; prepare for battle, betake yourselves to your arms, invest the city at once, and place the engines against it to batter it down: and they set themselves in array against the city ; besieged it in form, at least prepared for it; for it seems after all that it was not properly done.

Ver. 13 . And, behold, there came a prophet unto Ahab king of Israel , etc.] Supposed by the Jewish writers to be Micaiah the son of Imlah, (Kings 22:9) one of those perhaps that Obadiah hid in the cave, and now is sent out publicly on an errand to Ahab: saying, thus saith the Lord, hast thou seen all this great multitude ? considered what a vast number Benhadad's army consisted of: behold, I will deliver it into thine hand this day ; as great as it is: and thou shalt know that I am the Lord ; and not Baal, who can save by few as well as by many, and from a great multitude.

Ver. 14 . And Ahab said, by whom ? etc.] Knowing he had no army

with him sufficient to go out with against the Syrian army: and he said, thus saith the Lord, even by the young men of the princes of the provinces ; either such, as Kimchi thinks, who were brought up with him; or, as others, the sons of governors of provinces, who were kept as hostages, that their fathers might not rebel; neither of which is likely: but rather the servants of such princes who waited on them, and lived delicately and at ease, and were not trained up to military exercise, even by these should the victory be obtained: then he said, who shall order the battle ? begin the attack, we or they? or who shall conduct it, or be the general of the army, go before it, and lead them on? Ahab might think, being an idolater, that the Lord would not make use of him, or otherwise who could be thought of but himself? and he answered, thou ; thou must be the commander, go forth with the army, and make the attack upon the enemy.

Ver. 15 . Then he numbered the young men of the princes of the provinces, and they were two hundred and thirty two , etc.] A very small number to go forth against so great an army as the host of the Syrians, and these raw unexperienced young men: and after them he numbered all the people, even all the children of Israel, being seven thousand ; which could never be the number of all the people in the land, nor even in the city of Samaria, who were able to bear arms; but it must mean such who were willing to go out to war on this occasion: and the number being just the same as of those that bowed not the knee to Baal, has led the Jewish commentators to conclude that these were the men that were numbered for war; but it is not likely that they were all in Samaria, or that none but those would go to war, though it must be owned the number is remarkable.

Ver. 16 . And they went out at noon , etc.] From Samaria, the two hundred and thirty two young men, and the 7000 Israelites, openly, with great spirit and courage, fearless and undaunted; but it is not said that Ahab went out at the head of them; it seems as if he did not by what is said, (1 Kings 20:21), but Benhadad was drinking himself drunk in the pavilions (or booths, or tents), he, and the kings, the thirty two kings that helped him ; who either were his subjects, or his tributaries, or confederates; being secure, and having nothing to fear from Ahab, he and they gave themselves up to carousing and drinking, even at noon, and so destruction came upon them unawares, as on Belshazzar.

Ver. 17 . And the young men of the princes of the provinces went out first , etc.] From Samaria, before the 7000 did: and Benhadad sent

out ; of his pavilion, a messenger or messengers to his sentinels, to know what news, and how matters stood, whether Ahab had sent any message, signifying his compliance with his terms: and they told him, saying, there are men come out of Samaria ; but upon what account they could not say.

Ver. 18 . And he said, whether they be come out for peace , etc.] To propose terms of peace: take them alive ; make them prisoners, which was contrary to the laws of nations: or whether they be come out for war, take them alive ; he made no doubt of their being easily taken; but he would not have them be put to death, that he might examine them, and know the state of things in Samaria, and what Ahab intended to do, that he might take his measures accordingly.

Ver. 19 . So these young men of the princes of the provinces came out of the city , etc.] First, as before observed, and marched forwards towards the Syrian camp: and the army which followed them ; consisting of 7000 men.

Ver. 20 . And they slew everyone his man , etc.] The Syrian army, or at least a body of men detached from them, met them, opposed them, and fought them, and they slew of them 7232 men; as many as they themselves were: and the Syrians fled ; not expecting such a rebuff: and Israel pursued them ; to make some further advantage of their victory: and Benhadad the king of Syria escaped on an horse, with the horsemen ; with two couple of horsemen, as the Targum; with these to guard him he galloped away as fast as he could for his life.

Ver. 21 . And the king of Israel went out , etc.] Of Samaria; when he saw the Syrians fleeing, and his army pursuing, he went forth, perhaps, with more forces, who were now willing to join with him; Josephus says, Ahab had another army within the walls: and smote the horses and chariots ; that is, the men that rode on horses; and in chariots, the Syrian cavalry: and slew the Syrians with a great slaughter ; how many were slain is not said; but the Jewish historian says they plundered the camp, in which were much riches, and great plenty of gold and silver, and took their chariots and horses, and returned to the city of Samaria.

Ver. 22 . And the prophet came to the king of Israel , etc.] The same that came to him before: and said unto him, go, strengthen thyself ; exhorted him to fortify his cities, especially Samaria, and increase his army, that he

might be able to oppose the king of Syria: and mark, and see what thou doest : observe his moral and religious actions, and take heed that he did not offend the Lord by them, as well as make military preparations: for at the return of the year the king of Syria will come up against thee ; about the same time in the next year, at the spring of the year, when kings go out to war, (see 2 Samuel 11:1).

Ver. 23 . And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him , etc.] His ministers of state, his privy counsellors: their gods are gods of the hills, therefore they were stronger than we ; and beat them in the last battle; this notion they might receive from what they had heard of Jehovah delivering the law on Mount Sinai to Moses, and of the miraculous things done lately on Mount Carmel, as well as of their worship being in high places, especially at Jerusalem, the temple there being built on an hill, as was Samaria itself, near to which they had their last defeat; and this notion of topical deities very much obtained among the Heathens in later times, some of which they supposed presided over rivers, others over woods, and others over hills and mountains f425 : so Nemestinus the god of woods, Collina the goddess of hills, and Vallina of valleys f426 ; and Arnobius makes mention of the god Montinus, and Livy of the god Peninus, who had his name from a part of the Alps, so called where he was worshipped; and there also the goddess Penina was worshipped; and Lactantius speaks of the gods of the mountains the mother of Maximilian was a worshipper of; and even Jupiter had names from mountains, as Olympius, Capitolinus, etc. and such was the great god Pan, called mountainous Pan f430 : but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they ; and prevail over them, and conquer them.

Ver. 24 . And do this thing , etc.] Also take this further piece of advice: take the kings away, every man out of his place : for being brought up delicately, they were not inured to war, nor expert in the art of it; and being addicted to pleasure, gave themselves to that, and drew the king into it, which they observed was the case before, though they did not care to mention it; and if they were tributaries or allies, they would not fight as men do for their own country: and put captains in their rooms ; of his own people, men of skill and courage, and who would fight both for their own honour, and for the good of their country.

Ver. 25 . And number thee an army like the army that thou hast lost , etc.] Raise an army of an equal number, which they supposed he was able

to do: horse for horse and chariot for chariot ; as many horses and chariots as he had before: and we will fight against them in the plain ; where they could make use of their horses and chariots to greater advantage than on hills and mountains, (see Judges 1:19) and surely we shall be stronger than they ; and beat them: and he hearkened unto their voice, and did so ; took their counsel, and prepared an army, and placed captains in it instead of kings.

Ver. 26 . And it came to pass at the return of the year , etc.] In the spring, or autumn, as some think, (see Gill on “ 2 Samuel 11:1”) that Benhadad numbered the Syrians ; took a muster of his army, to see if he had got the number he had before: and went up to Aphek, to fight against Israel ; not that in Judah, (Joshua 15:53), rather that in Asher, (Joshua 19:30), but it seems to be that which Adrichomius places in Issachar, near to the famous camp of Esdraelon, or valley of Jezreel, where it is probable the king of Syria intended to have fought; the battle; and some travellers, as he observes, say f432 , the ruins of that city are still shown in that great camp or plain, not far from Gilboa, to the east of Mount Carmel, and five miles from Tabor; according to Bunting f433 , it was fourteen miles from Samaria; but it may be Aphaca near Mount Lebanon, and the river Adonis f434 , is meant.

Ver. 27 . And the children of Israel were numbered, and were all present , etc.] The same as before; the two hundred and thirty two young men of the princes of the provinces, and 7000 of the people, not one was missing: and went against them ; out of Samaria, towards Aphek: and the children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids : being few and weak, the two hundred and thirty two young men in one body, and the 7000 in another: but the Syrians filled the country: with their men, their horses, and their chariots.

Ver. 28 . And there came a man of God , etc.] The same as before, (Kings 20:13,22) or had come before the little army went out to meet the Syrians; though he might go to Ahab when encamped, for his encouragement: and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, thus saith the Lord, because the Syrians have said, the Lord is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys ; (see Gill on “ 1 Kings 20:23”). therefore will I deliver, all this great multitude into thine hand ; not for Ahab's sake would the Lord do this, who does not appear thankful to God for the former victory, nor to be reformed from his idolatry, and the better for it,

but for the honour of his own name, which had been blasphemed by the Syrians: and ye shall know that I am the Lord ; both of hills and valleys, the omnipotent Jehovah, the only true God.

Ver. 29 . And they pitched one over against the other seven days , etc.] Very probably the Israelites pitched upon an hill, and the Syrians waited till they changed their position, not caring to fall upon them, though so very supernumerary to them, for the reason before given: and so it was, that in the seventh day the battle was joined ; or they that made war drew nigh, as the Targum, and both sides engaged in battle: and the children of Israel slew of the Syrians 100,000 footmen in one day ; which was a prodigious slaughter to be made by so small an army; the hand of the Lord was visible in it.

Ver. 30 . But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city , etc.] Which perhaps was in the hands of the Syrians, and was designed for a retreat for them, should they be beaten: and there a wall fell upon twenty seven thousand of the men that were left ; not slain in the battle; here again the Lord might be seen, who, as Abarbinel observes, fought from heaven, and either by a violent wind, or an earthquake, threw down the wall upon them just as they had got under it for shelter: and Benhadad fled, and came into the city into an inner chamber ; or, “into a chamber within a chamber” f436 , for greater secrecy.

Ver. 31 . And his servants said unto him , etc.] Being reduced to the utmost extremity; for if he attempted to go out of the city, he would fall into the hands of the Israelites, and there was no safety in it, the wall of it being fallen down; and it could not be thought he could be concealed long in the chamber where he was, wherefore his servants advised as follows: behold, now, we have heard that the kings of the Israel are merciful kings ; not only the best of them as David and Solomon, but even the worst of them, in comparison of Heathen princes, were kind and humane to those that fell into their hands, and became their captives: let us, I pray thee ; so said one in the name of the rest: put sack cloth on our loins, and ropes upon our heads ; and so coming in such a mean and humble manner, and not with their armour on, they might the rather hope to have admittance; so, the Syracusans sent ambassadors to Athens, in filthy garments, with the hair of their heads and beards long, and all in slovenly habits, to move their pity f437 ; and go out to the king of Israel : and be humble supplicants to him: peradventure he will save thy life ; upon a petition to him from

him; to which the king agreed, and sent it by them. Ver. 32 . So they girded sackcloth on their loins, and put ropes on their heads , etc.] Signifying they came to surrender themselves to him as his captives and prisoners, and he might do with them as seemed good to him, hang them up if he pleased, for which they brought ropes with them, as a token that they deserved it, (see Isaiah 20:2-4), and came to the king of Israel, and said, thy servant Benhadad saith, I pray thee let me live : he that a little while ago insolently demanded his wives, and children, and silver, and gold, as his property, now is his humble servant, and begs, not for his crown and kingdom, but for his life: and he said, is he yet alive? he is my brother ; which was intimating at once, that not only they might expect he would spare his life, who seemed to be so glad that he was alive, but that he would show him more favour, having a great affection for him as his brother; this was a very foolish expression from a king in his circumstances, with respect to one who had given him so much trouble and distress, and had behaved with so much haughtiness and contempt towards him.

Ver. 33 . Now the men did diligently observe whether anything would come from him , etc.] That would be a good omen to them, and encourage them to hope for success; they observed him as diligently by his words and behaviour as soothsayers do when they look out for a lucky sign; for the word is sometimes used of divining ^{f438} : and did hastily catch it ; as soon as it was out of his mouth, and laid hold on it to improve it to advantage, being wiser than him: and they said, thy brother Benhadad ; him whom thou callest thy brother; he is thy brother, and is alive; this they caught, and expressed it, to observe whether it was a slip of his tongue, and whether he spoke it heartily, and would abide by it, or whether he would retract it: then he said, go ye, bring him ; meaning from the city to the place where he was: then Benhadad came forth to him ; out of his chamber, upon the report of his servants: and he caused him to come up into the chariot ; to sit and converse with him there. Ver. 34 . And [Benhadad] said unto him , etc.] The word Benhadad is not in the original text, and some, as Osiander and others, have thought they are the words of Ahab last spoken of; which seems most likely, who not only took Benhadad into his chariot, but in his great and superabundant kindness, though the conqueror, said to him what follows: the cities which my father took from thy father I will restore ; that is, those cities which Omri, the father of Ahab, had taken from the father of Benhadad; for as Omri was a prince of might and valour, (1 Kings 16:16-18,27), it is more probable that he took cities from the king of Syria, than that the king of Syria should take any from him, and which Ahab in

his circumstances weakly promises to restore: and thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria ; which confirms it that it is Ahab, and not Benhadad, that is speaking; for Benhadad's father never had any power nor residence in Samaria, whereas Omri, the father of Ahab, had, he built it, and made it his royal seat; and, in like manner, Ahab promises Benhadad that he should have his palace at Damascus, the metropolis of Syria, and exercise power there, and over all Syria; whereby Ahab renounced all right he had to the kingdom, and any of the cities of it: for by "streets" are not meant those literally so called, for the making of which there was no reason; nor markets to take a toll from, as some, supposing them to be the words of Benhadad; nor courts of judicature, to oblige them to pay it who refused it, as others; nor fortresses to keep them in awe; but a royal palace, as a learned critic has observed, for Benhadad to reside in; this Ahab gave him power to erect, and added: and I will send thee away with this covenant ; or promise now made: so he made a covenant with him ; confirmed the above promises: and sent him away ; free, to enjoy his crown and kingdom, for which folly and weakness Ahab is reproved by a prophet, (1 Kings 20:42).

Ver. 35 . And a certain man of the sons of the prophets , etc.] Which the Jews take to be Micaiah, and so Josephus f440 , which is probable; the same that had been with Ahab more than once; and, whoever he was, it is not unlikely that he was the same, since Ahab knew him when his disguise was off, (1 Kings 20:41), said unto his neighbour, in the word of the Lord, smite me, I pray thee ; told his neighbour, that by the command of God he was ordered to bid him smite him, so as to wound him: and the man refused to smite him ; being his neighbour, and perhaps a fellow prophet, and having an affection for him.

Ver. 36 . Then said he unto him, because thou hast not obeyed the voice of the Lord , etc.] In not smiting him; which, if he was a prophet, he must know how great an evil it was to disregard or disobey what was said by a prophet in his name; he must be inexcusable: behold, as soon as thou art departed from me, a lion shall slay thee . And as soon as he was departed from him, a lion found him, and slew him ; which may seem severe, yet being an act of disobedience to the command of God, by a prophet of his, was punishable with death.

Ver. 37 . Then he found another man, and said, smite me, I pray thee , etc.] This is not said to be his neighbour, nor one of the sons of

the prophets, but a rustic man, and so stuck not to take him at his word: and the man smote him, so that in smiting he wounded him ; in his face; made some incision in his flesh, broke the skin, and fetched blood of him; perhaps somewhere about his eyes, by what follows: this he got done to him, that he might look like a wounded soldier, and thereby get the more easily to the speech of Ahab.

Ver. 38 . So the prophet departed, and waited for the king by the way , etc.] As he went from Aphek, the place where the battle had been fought, to Samaria, his royal seat: and disguised himself with ashes upon his face ; the Targum is, he covered his eyes with a vail, or piece of cloth, which he wrapped about his head, as men do when they have got a wound or bruise in such a part, which seems very probable; for had he besmeared his face with ashes, clay, or dust, or any such thing, he could not so easily have got it off, as in (1 Kings 20:41).

Ver. 39 . And as the king passed by, he cried unto the king , etc.] With a loud voice, signifying he had something to say unto him, at which he stopped: and he said, thy servant went out into the midst of the battle ; this was not real, but fictitious, an apologue, fable, or parable, by which he would represent to Ahab his own case, and bring him under conviction of his folly, just as Nathan dealt with David: and, behold, a man turned aside ; a superior officer in the army: and brought a man unto me ; he had made a prisoner of: and said, keep this man ; do not let him escape: if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life, or else thou shalt pay a talent of silver ; if he let him go willingly, or by any means he should get out of his hands, then he should either die for it, or be fined a talent of silver, which of our money is three hundred and seventy five pounds; and to this it seems he agreed.

Ver. 40 . And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone , etc.] Employed in one thing or another relative to the battle, his prisoner committed to his care made his escape: and the king of Israel said unto him, so shall thy judgment be, thyself hast decided it ; the sentence was plain and open against him, that either he must die or pay the money, for he himself had agreed to it.

Ver. 41 . And he hasted, and took away the ashes from his face , etc.] Took off the linen cloth from his eyes, unveiled or unmasked himself: and the king of Israel discerned him, that he was of the prophets ; he knew

him again, having seen him once or twice before; otherwise there could be nothing in his face that could discover him to be a prophet, rather he was to be known by his habit.

Ver. 42 . And he said unto him, thus saith the Lord , etc.] He spake not his own sense, and in his own words, but in the name of the Lord, for which he had authority, that it might have the greater weight with Ahab: because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction ; meaning Benhadad; or “the man of my anathema or curse” f441 ; cursed of God for his blasphemy of him, and devoted by him to ruin on that account; or “of my net” f442 , being by his providence brought into a net or noose at Aphek, out of which he could not have escaped, had not Ahab let him go: therefore thy life shall go for his life ; as it shortly did, and that by the hand of a Syrian soldier, (1 Kings 22:34,35), and thy people for his people ; which was fulfilled by Hazael king of Syria, the sins of Israel rendering them deserving of the calamities they endured by his means, (see 2 Kings 8:12 10:32).

Ver. 43 . And the king of Israel went to his house heavy and displeased , etc.] With the prophet for what he had said, and with himself for what he had done in letting Benhadad go; the Targum is, he was “troubled and grieved,” not so much for the sin he had committed, as for the punishment of it on him and his people: and came to Samaria ; with a heavy heart, for the message of the prophet had spoiled the joy of his victory.

CHAPTER - INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 21

In this chapter we have an account of Ahab's design to have Naboth's vineyard, for which he offered him another, or the value of that, but Naboth refusing to part with it, Ahab fell sick, (1 Kings 21:1-4), the reason of which being found out by Jezebel, she devised means to get Naboth put to death under the colour of justice for blasphemy, (1 Kings 21:5-14), and then bid Ahab go and take possession of the vineyard, where he was met by Elijah, who denounced the judgments of God upon him, and Jezebel, and all his family, for his injustice, (1 Kings 21:15-26), but he humbling himself, the evil threatened was deferred to the days of his son, (1 Kings 21:27-29).

Ver. 1 . And it came to pass, after these things , etc.] After the two battles with the king of Syria, in which Ahab was victorious, and after

he had let Benhadad, a blasphemer, and injurious to him, go free: [that] Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel ; of which place (see Gill on “ Hosea 1:5”) or “who was in Jezreel”; that is Naboth, for the vineyard was in Samaria, (1 Kings 21:18) hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria ; that being the metropolis of the kingdom of Israel, is put for it, who, besides his palace in Samaria, had another in Jezreel; which, according to Bunting f443 , were sixteen miles distant from each other.

Ver. 2 . And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs , etc.] For a kitchen garden to produce eatables of the vegetable kind for his household, or for a flower garden; and perhaps for both, as Kimchi observes, it being customary to have such in court yards, or behind the house; perhaps he might take his notion of an herb garden from his neighbours the Syrians, who were very diligent and laborious in cultivating their gardens, as Pliny f444 ; hence “multa Syrorum olera”, the many herbs of the Syrians, became a proverb with the Greeks: because it is near unto mine house ; lay very convenient for him: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seemeth good unto thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money ; which seems very well spoken, that he would either give him a better in exchange, or purchase it at its full value; he did not pretend to take it by usurpation, by force, against his will, as it was represented by Samuel kings would do, (Samuel 8:14) as yet such oppression and tyranny was not exercised.

Ver. 3 . And Naboth said to Ahab, the Lord forbid it me that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee .] The inheritances of families were not to be alienated to another family, or tribe, nor even to be sold, unless in extreme poverty, and then to return at the year of jubilee, (Leviticus 25:23,28). Now Naboth was a man in good circumstances, and under no necessity of selling his vineyard; and, if he sold it, he might reasonably conclude, it becoming a part of the royal demesnes, would never revert to his family; and therefore, both out of regard to the law of God, and the good of his family, would not part with it at any rate: this shows that he was a conscientious man, and therefore is thought to be one of those that would not bow his knee to Baal, and against whom Ahab had a grudge, and sought an opportunity against him.

Ver. 4 . And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased , etc.] Just in the same humour he was after the prophet had delivered his message to him, (1 Kings 20:43), where the same words are used as here: because of

the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him, for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers , neither by way of exchange nor of purchase: and such a denial he could not bear, since it looked like treating him with contempt, and taxing him with imprudence at least, if not with injustice, or both: and he laid him down upon his bed ; or couch, which might be not in his bedchamber, but in one of his halls, where his courtiers were: and turned away his face ; to the wall, not choosing to have conversation with any of his nobles: and would eat no bread ; the vexation took away his stomach, and he became melancholy, at least sullen. Ver. 5 . But Jezebel his wife came unto him, and said, why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread ?] She perceived he was low spirited, and supposed he had met with something that had ruffled him, and made him so uneasy that he could not eat his food; and she desired to know what it was, that she might relieve him if possible.

Ver. 6 . And he said, because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, give me thy vineyard for money , etc.] Sell it him at his own price: or else, if it please thee ; if he liked it better: I will give thee another vineyard for it; as good, or better; and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard ; he represents this answer as surly and ill natured, and as the effect of obstinacy, concealing the reason Naboth alleged for his denial.

Ver. 7 . And Jezebel his wife said unto him, dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel ? etc.] Art thou not king of Israel? canst thou not do as thou pleasest? hast thou not power to oblige a subject to obey thy commands, and especially in such a trifling matter as parting with a vineyard, and that upon the most reasonable terms? thou hast too much demeaned thyself as a king; thou oughtest to have exerted thy kingly power and authority, and demanded it from him; the Targum is, “thou now shalt prosper in thy kingdom over Israel;” thy reign now is prosperous, and like to continue so, having obtained two such victories over thine enemies, and therefore should not be dejected with such a trifling thing as this: arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry : the kingdom being in such a flourishing state; and let not this affair give thee any trouble or uneasiness; I will take care of that, leave it with me: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite : without paying any money, or giving another vineyard in exchange for it.

Ver. 8 . So she wrote letters in Ahab’s name, and sealed them with his seal , etc.] He giving her leave, no doubt, to take his seal; though she might

not communicate her scheme to him, lest he should object to it: and sent the letters unto the elders, and to the nobles that were in his city dwelling with Naboth : to the chief magistrates of the city of Jezreel, where Naboth dwelt.

Ver. 9 . And she wrote in the letters, saying, proclaim a fast , etc.] Pretending fears of some dreadful calamity coming upon the nation, and therefore fasting and humiliation were necessary to avert it, and it would be right to inquire what crimes were committed by men among them, and punish them for them; and intimated to them that Naboth should be chosen as the great offender, and be accused, condemned, and put to death, R.

Joseph Kimchi thinks the phrase signifies “call an assembly or congregation”; convene a court of judicature, from the use of the word in the Talmudic language f446 ; and so it is thought it is used in (Jeremiah 36:6) and indeed it can hardly be thought that Jezebel should have much notion of fasting; and besides, if it was a public fast, why should it be proclaimed only in Jezreel, and not throughout the kingdom? and set Naboth on high among the people; the court being set, bring him to the bar and arraign him; perhaps in their courts of judicature there was a high place above the heads of the people, where criminals accused used to stand when they took their trials, that they might be seen and heard by all in court.

Ver. 10 . And set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him , etc.] Worthless wretches, that have cast off the yoke of the law, as Belial signifies, lawless abandoned creatures, that have no conscience of anything; “knights of the post”, as we call them, that will swear anything; these were to be set before Naboth, right against him to confront him, and accuse him to his face, and charge him with crimes next mentioned: saying, thou didst blaspheme God and the king : and so was guilty of death for the former, if not for both, and of confiscation of estate for the latter, which was the thing aimed at; and Jezebel was willing to make sure work of it, and therefore would have him accused of both: and then carry him out, and stone him, that he die ; immediately, without requiring the witnesses to give proof of their charge, and without giving Naboth leave to answer for himself.

Ver. 11 . And the men of the city, even the elders and the nobles

who were the inhabitants in his city, did as Jezebel had sent unto them , etc.] That Jezebel should contrive so execrable a scheme, and that there should be such sons of Belial among the common people to swear to such falsehoods, need not seem strange; but that the elders and nobles of the city, the chief magistrates thereof, should be so sadly and universally depraved as to execute such a piece of villany, is really surprising. Idolatry, when it prevails, takes away all sense of humanity and justice: [and] as it was written in the letters which she had sent unto them ; they punctually, exactly, obeyed the orders in them, as follows.

Ver. 12 . They proclaimed a fast , etc.] Or called a court, (see Gill on “ Kings 21:9”). and set Naboth on high among the people ; placed him at the bar as a criminal, (see Gill on “ 1 Kings 21:9”), though Josephus thinks he was set on an high place in the court, because he was of an illustrious birth.

Ver. 13 . And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him , etc.] Which position showed that they were his accusers, and had a charge against him; it being usual for the accusers and accused to be set face to face, as it was the manner of the Romans in later times, (Acts 25:16). Josephus says there were “three” men to accuse him; but the Targum, and all the ancient versions, have only “two”: and the men of Belial witnessed against him, [even] against Naboth, in the presence of the people ; both before the judges of the court, and before all the people that filled it, who came to hear the trial; so bold and impudent were they: saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king ; or “bless”, an euphemism; the phrase of cursing God being shocking to the ear, and therefore such a word is used to express it, (see Job 1:5 2:9), then they carried him forth out of the city ; without any further process of examining witnesses, and of hearing what the accused had to say in his defence; but immediately they carried him out of court, and out of the city, to put him to death, malefactors being executed always without the city: and stoned him with stones, that he died ; which was the death blasphemers were put to, (Leviticus 24:14,23), of the manner of which, (see Gill on “ Acts 7:58”), it seems from (2 Kings 9:26), that his sons were stoned with him. Ver. 14 . Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead .] Not only stoned, but stoned to death. This message was sent to her from the magistrates of Jezreel; for though the letters came in Ahab’s name, they might be privately informed that this was a scheme of Jezebel’s; besides, they knew she had the sway at court, and especially that the news of this man’s death would be acceptable to her, and the more if he was of the 7000

that would not bow the knee to Baal.

Ver. 15 . And it came to pass when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab , etc.] To whom she communicated the news as soon as possible: arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money, for Naboth is not alive, but dead ; some think that Naboth was a near relation to Ahab, his father's brother's son f449 ; which they endeavour to support from his estate lying next to Ahab's, and from his being ordered to be set in an high place among the people; and Josephus, as before observed, says he was of illustrious descent; and so Ahab upon his death, his sons being also put to death with him, was next heir to his estate; and therefore Jezebel bid him enter on the possession of it, he being dead, and his sons also, and therefore there was nothing in his way to obstruct him: but rather her meaning is, that Naboth was dead, not of a natural but violent death, by the hand of the civil magistrate; as for blasphemy against God, so for treason against the king, in virtue of which his estate was forfeited to the crown, and that Ahab had a right to possess it; and so it was certainly condemned in later times however among the Jews, that if a man was condemned to die by the sanhedrim, his goods came to his heirs, but if for treason against the king, they ceded to him f450 .

Ver. 16 . And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead , etc.] Of which he was informed by Jezebel: that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it ; if it was in Jezreel, that was sixteen miles from Samaria, and lay lower than that, in a valley, and therefore he is said to go down to it; and which he did very likely in great state and pomp, many of his nobles and captains accompanying him, as we read that Jehu and Bidkar did ride after him at this time, (2 Kings 9:25).

Ver. 17 . And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the prophet , etc.] Where he now was, when this word came to him, is not certain; nor what he had been employed in for some time past, since we hear nothing of him since the unction of Elisha, other prophets of lesser note being employed in messages to Ahab from time to time; perhaps Elijah, while Ahab was engaged in war with the king of Syria, spent his time in founding or reviving the schools of the prophets, and instructing and training up those that were in them for public usefulness, since we afterwards hear of them; the word that came to him is, by the Targum, called the word of prophecy,

as indeed it was, foretelling the destruction of Ahab and his house: saying; as follows.

Ver. 18 . Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria , etc.] Whose seat was there, his palace where he dwelt; and Benjamin of Tudela says f451 , that in his time might be discerned in Samaria the palace of Ahab king of Israel, that is, some traces of it; some connect the last clause with Israel, as if the sense was, that Ahab was king over those tribes of Israel, of which Samaria was the head: behold, [he is] in the vineyard of Naboth : or “will be” by the time thou gettest thither; though the Arabic version is, he is “now” in the vineyard of Naboth: whither he is gone down to possess it ; as if it was his legal inheritance.

Ver. 19 . And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, thus saith the Lord, hast thou killed, and also taken possession ? etc.] Killed in order to possess, and now taken possession upon the murder; some versions, as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic, read without an interrogation, “thou hast killed and hath taken possession”, so Joseph Kimchi and Ben Melech; charging him with the murder of Naboth, and the unjust possession of his vineyard; the murder is ascribed to him, because his covetousness was the cause of it; and it was done by the contrivance of his wife; and it is highly probable Ahab knew more of it, and connived at it, and consented to it, than what is recorded, and however, by taking possession upon it, he abetted the fact: and thou shalt speak unto him, saying, in the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine ; which was fulfilled in his sons, who were his flesh and blood, (2 Kings 9:26), for the punishment was respited in his days, and transferred to his sons, (see Kings 21:29), though dogs did lick his blood, even his blood also, according to this prophecy, though not in the same place, (see 1 Kings 22:38), wherefore some take these words not to be expressive of the place where, but of the cause or reason for which this should be done, and read the words, “inasmuch”, or “because dogs have licked” f452 , etc.

Ver. 20 . And Ahab said to Elijah, hast thou found me, O mine enemy ? etc.] So he reckoned him, because he dealt faithfully with him, and reproved him for his sins, and denounced the judgments of God upon him for them: and he answered, I have found thee ; as a thief, a robber and plunderer, in another’s vineyard; he had found out his sin in murdering Naboth, and unjustly possessing his vineyard, which was revealed to him by the Lord; and now was come as his enemy, as he called him, as being

against him, his adversary, not that he hated his person, but his ways and works: because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord ; had given up himself wholly to his lusts, was abandoned to them, and as much under the power of them as a man is that has sold himself to another to be his slave; and which he served openly, publicly in the sight of the omniscient God, and in defiance of him. Abarbinel gives another sense of the word we render “sold thyself”, that he “made himself strange”, as if he was ignorant, and did not know what Jezebel had done; whereas he knew fully the whole truth of the matter, and that Naboth was killed through her contrivance, and by her management purposely; and so he did evil in the sight of that God that knows all things, pretending he was ignorant when he was not, and this Elijah found out by divine revelation; so the word is used in (Genesis 42:6 2 Kings 12:5,7), but the former sense is best, as appears from (1 Kings 21:25).

Ver. 21 . Behold, I will bring evil upon thee , etc.] Upon his own person, by cutting him off with a violent death, though his family was so numerous, having no less than seventy sons: and will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left Israel ; (see Gill on “ 1 Kings 14:10”).

Ver. 22 . And will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah , etc.] Two of his predecessors, whose families were utterly destroyed, (1 Kings 15:29 16:11), for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger, and made Israel to sin : not only by his worship of the calves, but of the idols of the Zidonians, particularly Baal, and also of the Amorites, (1 Kings 21:26).

Ver. 23 . And of Jezebel also spake the Lord , etc.] To Elijah, and by him: saying, the dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel or in the inheritance or portion of Jezreel, as the Targum; Jarchi interprets it, the valley of Jezreel; the fulfilment of this see in (2 Kings 9:30,33,36).

Ver. 24 . Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat, and him that dieth in the field the fowls of the air shall eat .] That is, they shall have no burial, (see 1 Kings 14:11 16:4) hitherto are the words of the Lord by Elijah; next follow the remarks of the historian.

Ver. 25 . But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord , etc.] Not of any of his

predecessors, even those whose families had been destroyed, as his would be, (Kings 21:21). whom Jezebel his wife stirred up ; to idolatry, revenge, and murder, and to whose will he was a slave, and is one instance of his being a captive to sin, and giving up himself to the power of it.

Ver. 26 . And he did very abominably in following idols , etc.] Which were abominable to the Lord; “dunghill gods”, as the Tigurine version: according to all things as did the Amorites, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel ; meaning the seven nations that formerly inhabited Canaan, but were driven out for their sins, to make way for the children of Israel, of which the Amorites were one, and here put for all the rest.

Ver. 27 And it came to pass when Ahab heard these words , etc.] Delivered in (1 Kings 21:21-24), that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon, his flesh , tore off his clothes, and stripped himself of all, even of his very shirt, and put sackcloth on his bare flesh, a coarse cloth made of hair, and such as sacks are made with: and fasted , how long it is not said: and lay in sackcloth ; in the night on his bed, would have no linen on him day nor night: and went softly : step by step, as persons mourning, grieving, and pensive, do; the Targum renders it “barefoot”, and so Jarchi.

Ver. 28 . And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite , etc.] After he was gone from Ahab, and Ahab had been some time in this humble posture; the Targum calls it the word of prophecy, and so it was, as the next verse shows: saying: as follows.

Ver. 29 . Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me ? etc.] Which yet was but an external humiliation, to be seen only with bodily eyes, as were all his actions and postures, before observed. Some Jewish writers f453 think his repentance was true and perfect, and his conversion thorough and real: they tell us f454 , that he was in fasting and prayer morning and evening before the Lord, and was studying in the law all his days, and returned not to his evil works any more, and his repentance was accepted: but the contrary appears manifest; we never read that he reproved Jezebel for the murder of Naboth, nor restored the vineyard to his family, which he would have done had he been a true penitent; nor did he leave his idols; we quickly hear of his consulting with the four hundred prophets of the groves, and expressing his hatred of a true prophet of the Lord, (Kings 22:6,8), his humiliation arose from dread of punishment, and not from the true fear of God; however, it was such as was never seen in

any of his wicked predecessors, and is taken notice of by the Lord. Luther f455 from these words concluded, and was persuaded, that he was saved: because he humbled himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days, but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house ; this was not a pardon, only a reprieve; the sentence pronounced on him and his family was not taken off, nor countermanded, only the execution of it prolonged; it is promised that the destruction of his family should not be in his lifetime, but after his death, in his son's days, otherwise he himself died a violent death, and the dogs licked his blood, as were foretold; however, this may be an encouragement to those who are truly humbled for their sins, and really repent of them, that they shall receive forgiveness at the hand of God, since he showed so much regard to an outward humiliation and repentance.

CHAPTER - INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 22

This chapter relates, that after three years' peace with the king of Syria, Ahab was inclined to go to war with him, to take Ramothgilead out of his hands; and he drew in Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, to join him in it, (<112201> Kings 22:1-4), but before they went into it, they took advice, Ahab of his four hundred prophets, which Jehoshaphat not being satisfied with, a true prophet of the Lord, Micahah, was sent for, (1 Kings 22:5-14) who, when he came, jeered Ahab with what his prophets had said to him; intimated that he should be killed, and explained it to him how he came to be deceived by his prophets, (1 Kings 22:15-23) upon which he was smitten on the cheek by Zedekiah, one of the false prophets, and imprisoned by the order of Ahab, (1 Kings 22:24-28), after which the two kings went to the battle, and Jehoshaphat was in great danger of his life; but Ahab was wounded, and died, (1 Kings 22:29-40), and the chapter is concluded with an account of the reign of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, (1 Kings 22:41-50), and of Ahaziah king of Israel, (1 Kings 22:51-53).

Ver. 1 . And they continued three years without war between Syria and Israel .] From the time that Benhadad made a covenant with Ahab; not three full years, but part of them: it was threatened by Elijah from the Lord, that Ahab's life should go for Benhadad's, because he had let him, go, (1 Kings 22:42), but because of his humiliation, as is thought by Ben Gersom and others, it was respited for those three years; and now an opportunity and occasion would be given for the fulfilment of what was threatened.

Ver. 2 . And it came to pass in the third year , etc.] Of the peace, before

it was expired: that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel ; to Ahab, from Jerusalem to Samaria, reckoned thirty two miles f456 ; either to make peace with him, and put an end to the wars which subsisted between Israel and Judah since the division of the kingdom, (1 Kings 22:44) or to contract an affinity with him, by marrying his son to a daughter of Ahab, (2 Kings 8:18,26) or rather after peace was made, and that strengthened by the marriage; and so he went merely to pay a visit, as he judged he might then with great safety; and he and all his retinue were entertained by Ahab in a very sumptuous and liberal manner, (2 Chronicles 18:1,2).

Ver. 3 . (And the king of Israel said unto his servants , etc.] His nobles, those of his privy council, his ministers of state; or “had said” f457 , some little time before Jehoshaphat came: know ye that Ramoth in Gilead is ours a city of refuge beyond Jordan, in the tribe of Gad, and so of course must belong to the kingdom of Israel, of which (see Joshua 20:8) and we be still, and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria?) neither demand it, nor take any measures to oblige him to deliver it up; representing it as a great omission, and as a piece of negligence and slothfulness, or cowardice.

Ver. 4 And he said unto Jehoshaphat, wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramothgilead ? etc.] This affair being lately canvassed at the council board, and very much on Ahab’s mind, he puts this question to Jehoshaphat, his visitor, relation, and ally; wisely considering that his own forces were small, and that to have such an auxiliary might be of great advantage to him: and Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses ; meaning, that he and his soldiers, foot and horse, were at his service.

Ver. 5 . And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, inquire, I pray thee, at the word of the Lord today .] Being a pious and religious prince, he did not choose to go into a war at once, without consulting the Lord by his prophets, whether it was his will and pleasure they should engage in it, and should prosper; and he was desirous of having this done immediately, before they proceeded any further.

Ver. 6 . Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men , etc.] False prophets, as the Targum and Arabic version; and they are called Ahab’s prophets, and not the Lord’s, (1 Kings 22:23) perhaps these were the prophets of the groves, that ate at Jezebel’s table,

and were preserved when the prophets of Baal were destroyed, since the number agrees with them, (see 1 Kings 18:19) and said unto them, shall I go against Ramothgilead to battle, or shall I forbear ? which would you advise to? signifying he should take their advice: and they said, go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king : which words are very ambiguous, like the oracles of the Heathens; for they do not express who or what should be delivered up, for the word it is a supplement, nor to what king the delivery should be made; whether the Syrians, and the place they held should be given up to king Ahab, which they would have understood; or whether the Israelites should be delivered up to king Benhadad; so that, whichever had been the case, the credit of their prophecy would be secured. They used the word “Lord”, and not Baal, in complaisance to Jehoshaphat, and perhaps as directed by Ahab.

Ver. 7 . And Jehoshaphat said, is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might inquire of him ?] He suspected these to be false prophets, though he would not call them so; nor suggest that they were not the prophets of the Lord, because he would not affront Ahab, who had an opinion of them; and therefore asks, if there were no other that went under the character of a prophet of the Lord, that he might inquire of him for his further satisfaction.

Ver. 8 . And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, there is yet one man (Micaiah the son of Imlah), by whom we may inquire of the Lord , etc.] And but one in Samaria; Elijah and Elisha were elsewhere: but I hate him, for he doth not prophesy of good concerning me, but evil ; who is thought to be the same that was several times with him when engaged in the war with the king of Syria, (1 Kings 20:13,22,28,35,38) and each time, excepting the last, he brought him good tidings; but because, in his last message, he told him, that, since he had let Benhadad go, his life should go for his life, and his people for his people, for that he hated him: and Jehoshaphat said, let not the king say so ; which was very modestly, though perhaps too gently, said; suggesting that the prophets of the Lord should be heard, respected, and honoured, let their message be as it would, since they spake not of their own mind and will, but what they were moved unto by the Spirit of God.

Ver. 9 . Then the king of Israel called an officer , etc.] An eunuch, as the word is sometimes used, one of pages: and said, hasten hither Micaiah the son of Imlah ; who, as it seems from (1 Kings 22:26) was in prison, where

perhaps Ahab had cast him for his last prophecy to him, and where he had lain ever since; and this gives a reason why he could so readily send for him, knowing where he was.

Ver. 10 . And the king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, sat each on his throne , etc.] In great state and majesty: having put on their robes ; their royal robes, which they wore when they appeared in pomp and grandeur: in a void place in the entrance of the gate of Samaria ; where courts of judicature were held, and there was an open void space for the people to assemble in to hear; the word has the signification of a corn floor, and the Jews suppose they and their attendants sat in a semicircle like the half of a corn floor, after the same manner in which they say the sanhedrim at Jerusalem sat f458 : and all the prophets prophesied before them ; concerning this affair of going to Ramothgilead.

Ver. 11 . And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron , etc.] Horns are emblems of power and might, and iron ones of greater strength still; the prophets sometimes made use of visible signs, to represent the things they prophesied of should come to pass, (see Isaiah 20:2,3 Jeremiah 27:2), and the same method this prophet took: and he saith, thus saith the Lord; imitating the true prophets: with these shall thou push the Syrians until thou hast consumed them : Abarbinel thinks he had in view the blessing of Joseph by Moses, (Deuteronomy 33:17) where he is compared to a bullock with horns; and these said to be the ten thousands of Ephraim, and the thousands of Manasseh; and Ahab being of the tribe of Joseph, and ruling in Ephraim and Manasseh, the prophet chose to make use of this emblem for his encouragement. Ver. 12 . And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, go up to Ramothgilead, and prosper , etc.] All encouraged the king to go up against this place, and prophesied of victory, as Zedekiah did: for the Lord shall deliver it into the king's hand , (see Gill on “ 1 Kings 22:6”).

Ver. 13 . And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spake unto him , etc.] By the way, as they came along together, as Josephus observes: behold, now, the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth ; they are unanimous that he shall prosper in his undertaking against the Syrians: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good ; which, as an ignorant man, he might advise to from good will to the prophet, that he might not be branded with singularity, and a spirit of contradiction, and that he might have the favour

of the king, and be released from prison, pitying his miserable condition in which he found him.

Ver. 14 . And Micaiah said, as the Lord liveth , etc.] He swore by the living God, for the confirmation of what he was about to say: what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak ; truly and faithfully, keeping nothing back, nor adding anything, whether it be good or evil, pleasing or displeasing; it looks as if as yet he had no instruction from the Lord what to say, and yet the vision he later declares seems to have been had by him before, (1 Kings 22:17,19).

Ver. 15 . So he came to the king , etc.] Being introduced by the officer: and the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go up against Ramothgilead to battle, or shall we forbear? the same question in the same words that was put to the other prophets, (1 Kings 22:6), only there he uses the singular number, here the plural, including Jehoshaphat with him: and he answered him, go, and prosper: for the Lord shall deliver [it] into the hand of the king ; he answered not in the name of the Lord, saying, “thus saith the Lord”, nor did he speak his own sense and in his own words, nor seriously, but by way of derision; he took up the words of the prophets, and bantered them; it is as if he should say, the prophets bid you go, and tell you that you shall “prosper”, and that the city will be delivered into the king’s hand; do as they direct you, and see what the issue will be, no doubt it will be good, since they are all agreed; but he delivered the above words with such gestures, and such a tone, and with a contemptuous smile in his countenance, which showed that he spoke not seriously, but sarcastically; and this the king plainly discovered, as appears by what follows.

Ver. 16 . And the king said unto him, how many times shall I adjure thee , etc.] Not that he had as yet adjured him at all, or not till now; but he asks him how often he must be obliged to do it; and now he adjures him once for all, that he might not be forced to repeat it: that thou tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the Lord ? for he observed he did not speak in the name of the Lord before, and what he said was not in a serious but ludicrous manner, and not to be regarded as truth.

Ver. 17 . And he said , etc.] The prophet, in a serious and solemn manner, being adjured by the king: I saw all Israel scattered on the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd ; the armies of Israel routed, dispersed, and fleeing, some one way and some another, on the mountains of Gilead near

Ramoth, weak and helpless, not knowing where to go for safety, having none to direct them; and this was either now instantly represented to his mind, or what had been before in a dream or vision: and the Lord said, these have no master ; these sheep have no shepherd this army hath no general, [Israel] has [lost its king]: let them return every man to his house in peace , very few slain, Jarchi thinks Ahab only, (see 1 Kings 22:31) that part of the threatening, (1 Kings 20:42) was now to be accomplished, “thy life shall go for his life”, but the other part, “and thy people for his people”, was to be deferred to another time.

Ver. 18 . And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat , etc.] Plainly perceiving that the prophet foretold that he should fall in battle: did not I tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil ? intimating that this proceeded from spite and malice, from ill will to him and hatred of him, and was not from the Lord, and therefore not to be regarded; he had told him three years ago his life should go for letting Benhadad go; but it had not proved true, and no more would this; and Jehoshaphat being an easy man, and too credulous, believed what Ahab said of the character of this prophet, or otherwise it is not to be accounted for that he should go with him to war after such a declaration made.

Ver. 19 . And he saith, hear thou therefore the word of the Lord , etc.] Since he had represented what he had said as proceeding from hatred to him, he would make it clear and plain that what he had said was the word of the Lord, and according to his mind; and that what the other prophets had said was owing to a lying spirit in them, which the Lord suffered for his ruin; all which are represented as in a vision, in which things are brought down to the capacities of men, and not as really transacted: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne ; so it was represented to his mind, as if he had seen with his bodily eyes the divine Being in a glorious form, as a king sitting on his throne, to do justice and judgment; as Ahab and Jehoshaphat were now sitting on their thrones, only as a far greater King, even the King of kings, and in a more splendid manner: and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left the ministering angels ready to do his will.

Ver. 20 . And the Lord said, who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead ? etc.] Not that it can be supposed that the Lord entered into a consultation with the angels upon this subject; only that it was the decree of God that he should go thither, and fall by the hand of the man whom he had let go, as a just punishment of him: and one said

on this manner, and another said on that manner ; not that there was such an altercation among them; it only signifies, that there are various ways and means, by which the purposes and decrees of God may be and are brought about.

Ver. 21 . And there came forth a spirit , etc.] Not from the heavenly host on the right hand or the left, for they are pure and holy spirits, and impeccable, and cannot lie or deceive; but the evil spirit, Satan, the father of lies, the old deceiver, who came forth from his own place and his own company: and stood before the Lord presented himself before him, as Satan did, (Job 1:6), and said, I will persuade him ; or prevail upon him; evil spirits love to be employed in doing harm to men, they go about seeking whom they may devour. This could not be the spirit of Naboth, as the Jews say f460 , seeking revenge on Ahab; that was in a state of happiness, could not move from thence, and be capable of sinning.

Ver. 22 . And the Lord said unto him, wherewith ? etc.] What way and method did he propose, to persuade Ahab to go up to Ramoth? the Lord is introduced in this visionary narrative as asking this question, not as ignorant of the scheme of the evil spirit, but in order to bring it out, and lead on to the following account: and he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets ; put them on encouraging Ahab to go up, and promising him success, as he had in former battles with the king of Syria, and which might both encourage them to give forth such a prediction, and him to believe it to be true; this proposal was quite agreeable to the character of the devil, as the father of lies: and he said, thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also ; not only make use of this artifice to persuade, but succeed also; the Lord knew that what he should suggest to the prophets, and they should deliver to Ahab, would be agreeable to his inclination, nor would he do anything in the course of his providence to hinder its taking effect: go forth, and do so ; which was giving leave to try his skill in the art of persuasion, in which he knew he would succeed, and bring on the righteous judgment of God upon Ahab; with this compare (John 13:27).

Ver. 23 . Now therefore behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these thy prophets , etc.] That is, suffered the lying spirit to suggest a lie to them, and sent them strong delusions to believe that lie, whose minds were disposed at any rate to flatter Ahab, to whom they told it; which was the way designed to bring him to the ruin appointed for

him: and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee : he had decreed it in himself, declared it by Micaiah his prophet, and suffered all those steps to be taken by Satan and the false prophets, to bring him to it.

Ver. 24 . But Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near , etc.] Stepped in haste and passion from the place where he was: and smote Micaiah on the cheek ; in contempt of him, and to show his indignation at what he said; this he did in open court, before two kings; one he believed would favour and screen him in this lawless action, and the other, out of his own jurisdiction, had not courage and presence of mind to resent it: and said, which way went the Spirit of the Lord from me to speak unto thee? hereby boasting that he had the Spirit of the Lord, and was directed by him in what he said, and still remained with him, and could not possibly go to Micaiah, and suggest the very reverse; and therefore pertly asks him which way the spirit went, intimating that it was impossible he could steer a course contrary to himself.

Ver. 25 . And Micaiah said, behold, thou shalt see in the day when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself .] Who would either accompany Ahab to the battle, and, upon his being wounded, flee to the first place of secrecy for safety; or, upon the news of his defeat brought to Samaria, would betake himself to a private chamber for security, fearing the enemy would pursue to the very place; or else through fear of the populace, who would attribute the death of the king to the advice of him and the other prophets.

Ver. 26 . And the king of Israel said , etc.] To some of his officers: take Micaiah, and carry him back unto Amon the governor of the city : the chief magistrate under the king; a sort of sheriff, who had the care of malefactors, and of all committed to prison, from whom he was received by the messenger, and now sent back to him: and to Joash the king's son ; who might be over his household, as sometimes the king's son was, (2 Chronicles 26:21) or might be viceroy while the king was without the city, and at the gate of it, and about to go to war.

Ver. 27 . And say, thus saith the king, put this fellow in prison , etc.] In the common prison of the city, where he had been before, as it seems; and might be now ordered into a more confined place in it, and what might be called "little ease": and feed him with bread of affliction, and with water of affliction ; with bad bread and foul water, and but little of either; just

enough to keep alive, and to continue starving: until I come in peace ; which he seemed confident of, and intimates that then he would punish him more severely, even with death, as a false prophet.

Ver. 28 . And Micaiah said, if thou return at all in peace, the Lord hath not spoken by me , etc.] I am content to be reckoned a false prophet, and to be punished as such: and, he said, hearken, O people, everyone of you ; he called aloud unto them to observe what he had predicted, and mark the issue of it, and to bear testimony for him, or against him, as things should be.

Ver. 29 . So the king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, went up to Ramothgilead .] Which, according to Bunting f461 , was twenty four miles from Samaria. That Ahab went is no wonder, it was his own motion first, his inclination led to it, his prophets encouraged him, and, in bravado to the prophet of the Lord, was determined upon it; but it may seem much more strange that Jehoshaphat should, after such an account as Micaiah had given, and who, doubtless, could observe a great difference between him and the prophets of Ahab; and yet there is much to be said which might incline him to go, as that there were four hundred prophets all agreed, and who made use of the name of the Lord, and pretended to be true prophets; and though he might suspect them, he could not confute them; and Micaiah, he prophesied evil of Ahab only, and therefore Jehoshaphat might think himself safe in going; and besides, he had given his word to Ahab, and he did not choose to go from it; to which may be added, that Ahab's cause was just, to recover a part of his own dominions.

Ver. 30 . And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle , etc.] Change his clothes, his royal robes, and put on others, perhaps the habit of a common soldier; having, it may be, been informed by some deserters or spies, of the design of Benhadad against him. Abarbinel thinks the meaning is, that he would clothe himself with a coat of mail, and take to him the each of the instruments of war, and so go into the battle secure; this seems probable from (1 Kings 22:34) and this he might do to elude the prophecy of Micaiah: but put thou on thy robes ; his royal robes, or rather keep them on, that he might appear to be the chief commander of the army. There seems to be a good deal of insincerity and treachery in this conduct of Ahab's, whatever honour he might pretend to Jehoshaphat, or safety he might promise him in such a situation; his view seems to be to save himself at the hazard of the life of

Jehoshaphat, especially if the Septuagint version could be established, “and put on my clothes”; which is natural enough, but would have been too barefaced: and the king of Israel disguised himself, and went into the battle ; as if he had been a common soldier.

Ver. 31 . But the king of Syria commanded his thirty and two captains that had the rule over his chariots , etc.] This was the number of his kings in the first battle with Israel, and of his captains in the second, (1 Kings 20:1,24,25), and the same number he had now, being very probably not only the number of his chariots, but the division of his army was into so many battalions, under the command of these captains of chariots: saying, fight neither with small nor great ; of those that belonged to Jehoshaphat: save only with the king of Israel ; and his men; for it can hardly be thought that his orders were to fight with none, nor kill any in the battle but Ahab personally; though it is very probable he might give them directions to aim at him chiefly, knowing that, if he was killed or taken, his army would flee or surrender; and he might be desirous of getting him into his hands, as he had been in his; and the rather his spite was against him, as he was the mover of the war.

Ver. 32 . And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat , etc.] In his royal robes: that they said, surely it is the king of Israel ; for they might not know the persons either of Ahab or him, but judged by his habit: and they turned aside to fight against him ; pressed upon him with all their force, either to take him or slay him: and Jehoshaphat cried out ; with a loud voice, either to the captains to let them know who he was, or to his men to come to his assistance, or rather to God to help and deliver him; since it is said in (2 Chronicles 18:31) that the Lord helped him, and moved or inclined the hearts of the captains to depart from him, as it follows here. Ver. 33 . And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel , etc.] Against whom only their orders were to fight: that they turned back from pursuing him ; for upon so great a force coming upon him he could not withstand, he fled.

Ver. 34 . And a certain man drew a bow at a venture , etc.] Not aiming at the king of Israel, or knowing whereabout he was. In the Targum on (Chronicles 18:33), this man is said to be Naaman, the general of the army of the king of Syria, and so Jarchi here; but though he did this in his simplicity, as the word signifies, without any intention to smite any

particular person; yet God directed the arrow to the man he had marked for destruction, and neither his disguise, nor coat of mail, could secure from that: and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness : of which the pieces of armour on him were joined together, the higher and lower parts of it, the breastplate, and what covered the belly; and though these were joined as close as they were capable of joining them in those times, yet the arrow, guided by divine Providence, found its way into his body: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, turn thine hand ; or hands, with which he held the reins, and turn the horses on one side: and carry me out of the host ; where the battle was hottest, to a place more remote and private, that he might have the wound examined, and the blood stopped, and return again, as it seems he did: for I am wounded ; or rather “I am sick” f462 , or ill, as the Targum; somewhat out of order, and therefore chose to retire a little while; not caring it should be known that he was smitten and wounded, lest his soldiers should be disheartened.

Ver. 35 . And the battle increased that day , etc.] It went on, and did not stop upon Ahab’s going out of the host, but was very hot, and both sides fought furiously: and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians : the Targum is, “he strengthened himself, and stood;” he exerted himself to the uttermost, and stood as long as he could, or could be supported, fighting against the Syrians, to animate his army, and that the Syrians might not have any notion of his being wounded: and died at even : in his chariot: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot ; or “bosom” of it, the hollow part of it.

Ver. 36 . And there went a proclamation throughout the host, about the going down of the sun , etc.] Much about the time that Ahab died; and this proclamation by an herald might be made by his order, as he was dying, or by Jehoshaphat, when he understood he was dead: saying, every man to his city, and every man to his own country ; the order was to cease fighting, and make the best of their way as fast as they could to their own homes, since their shepherd and master was dead, which fulfilled the vision of Micaiah, (1 Kings 22:17). It seems to have been a drawn battle, at least there is no account of the advantage on either side.

Ver. 37 . So the king died, and they brought him to Samaria , etc.] In the chariot he died in: and they buried the king in Samaria ; where his father Omri was buried, (1 Kings 16:28).

Ver. 38 . And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria , etc.] After the body was taken out, very likely the chariot driver, who drove it into the pool, and plunged it into it, as the word signifies, to cleanse it from the blood of his master: and the dogs licked up his blood ; mixed with the water of the pool; the Septuagint adds, “the swine”, which is not probable, such creatures not being bred in the land of Israel: and they washed his armour ; his coat of mail, through the joints of which the blood issued, and ran upon it. The word is sometimes used for whores, and is so translated here in the Greek version, and by Munster and Castalio; and both Ben Gersom and Abarbinel say, that women, who were harlots, washed here in his blood, mixed with water; and so Josephus f464 writes, that afterwards it was a custom for whores to wash in this pool; though some say two whores were painted on Ahab’s chariot, by the order of Jezebel, to inflame his lust, and these were what were washed; but the word signifies armour, or rather ornaments, clothes, jewels, etc. and now all this was according to the word of the Lord which he spake ; both by Elijah, that as the dogs licked the blood of Naboth, so they should his, as they now did, though not in the same place; nor was it necessary to fulfil the prophecy, (see Gill on “ 1 Kings 21:19”), though some have thought that his blood, mixed with the water of the pool of Samaria, was carried in a stream down to Jezreel, and there licked by the dogs, where Naboth’s was; but chiefly what was spoken by Micaiah is here respected, that thus Ahab fell at Ramothgilead, as he had prophesied, (Kings 22:17,20,28) and his life went for the life of Benhadad, as he had before declared, (1 Kings 20:42).

Ver. 39 . Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, and the ivory house which he made , etc.] Which, being a very curious and extraordinary thing, is particularly mentioned; though perhaps it might not be made wholly of ivory, but inlaid with it; we read of ivory houses in (Amos 3:15), and all the cities that he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel ? in which the acts of his predecessors were recorded, (see 1 Kings 14:19 15:31 16:14,20,27) not the Scripture book of Chronicles, for there none of these things are related.

Ver. 40 . So Ahab slept with his fathers, and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead ,] Of whom more is said in the latter part of this chapter, and in the following book.

Ver. 41 . And Jehoshaphat the son of Asa began to reign over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel .] And as Ahab reigned twenty two

years, (1 Kings 16:29), Jehoshaphat must reign about eighteen years with him, and seven years after him.

Ver. 42 . Jehoshaphat was thirty five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty and five years in Jerusalem , etc.] So that he must be sixty years of age when he died: and his mother's name was Azubah, the daughter of Shilhi ; but of what family they were is not said. Ver. 43 . And he walked in all the ways of Asa his father , etc.] Who was a good prince: he turned not aside from doing that which was right in the eyes of the Lord ; in his moral conversation, religious worship, and civil government: nevertheless, the high places were not taken away, for the people offered and burnt incense yet in the high places ; he took away the high places and groves for idolatrous worship, (2 Chronicles 17:6), but not the high places in which sacrifices were offered to the Lord, which ought to have been, especially since the temple was built; and those in the tribes of Judah and Benjamin were altogether inexcusable, being near to the temple, and under no restraint, as those of the ten tribes were; but the people were fond of them, because of their antiquity, and it was difficult for religious princes to remove them, if inclined.

Ver. 44 . And Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel .] First with Ahab, with whom he contracted an affinity, and joined with him in his expedition to Ramothgilead, and with Ahaziah his successor.

Ver. 45 . And all the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, and all his might that he showed, and all his wars, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel ?] Many of them are recorded in the canonical book of Scripture, which bears the name of Chronicles; and more might be in this referred to, out of which might be taken what God has thought fit to transmit to future times; (see 2 Chronicles 17:1-20:37).

Ver. 46 . And the remnant of the Sodomites, which remained in the days of his father Asa, he took out of the land .] His father Asa removed many of these filthy creatures, but not all; as many, no doubt, as came within his knowledge, but some remained, whom this his son removed, being of the same disposition with his father, (see 1 Kings 15:12).

Ver. 47 . There was then no king in Edom, a deputy was king .] Which had been the case from the times of David, who subdued Edom, and placed garrisons in it, and governors over it, (2 Samuel 8:14) and

continued through the reign of Jehoshaphat, unto the times of his son, under whom the Edomites revolted, and set up a king of their own, (2 Kings 8:20), with a view to which this is observed, as also to account for it how Jehoshaphat could build ships in Eziongeber, which was in the land of Edom, of which in the next verse, because the whole country was governed by a viceroy, or deputy, under him.

Ver. 48 . Jehoshaphat made ships of Tarshish , etc.] Ships to go to sea, particularly the Indian sea, (1 Kings 10:22). Tarshish is used for the sea in general, (Psalm 48:7 Isaiah 2:16), in the Cetib, or text, it is “ten”; in the Keri, or margin, it is “made”, which we follow, and may be put together, as in the Tigurine version, and read, “he made ten ships to go by sea”: even to go to Ophir for gold ; as Solomon did; of which place (see Kings 9:28), but they went not, for the ships were broken at Eziongeber ; the port where they were built: as soon as they were launched, or sailed, they were broken to pieces against the rocks near the harbour, which stood up like a man’s backbone, whence the port had its name; (see Gill on “ 1 Kings 9:26”), and if this was Calzem, as there observed, near to it was a dangerous place for ships, and where many were lost, and is supposed to be the place where Pharaoh and his host were drowned f467 ; the reason of this shipwreck was, because Jehoshaphat joined himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, for which he was reprov’d by the prophet Eliezer, and this was his punishment, (Chronicles 20:35-37).

Ver. 49 . Then said Ahaziah the son of Ahab unto Jehoshaphat , etc.] Who very probably had built some more ships on his own, having broke off his partnership with Ahaziah: let my servants go with thy servants in the ships ; since he was refused a part in the ships themselves, he desires leave to send men aboard them to traffic for him abroad: but Jehoshaphat would not ; having been reprov’d by a prophet of the Lord, and had suffered the loss of his ships by joining with him already.

Ver. 50 . And Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father , etc.] In the city of Sion, where David, Rehoboam, Abijam, and Asa, were buried: and Jehoram his son reigned in his stead ; who was now thirty two years of age, and he reigned ten years. Ver. 51 . Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah , etc.] It is observed, that Jehoshaphat began to reign in the fourth year of Ahab, and Ahab reigned twenty two years, (see 1 Kings 22:41 16:29), and therefore

Ahab's son must begin to reign in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat; but perhaps he was made king in his father's lifetime, before he went on his expedition to Ramothgilead, or Ahab's reign was not twenty two years complete: and reigned two years over Israel ; not complete, as appears from (<120301> Kings 3:1).

Ver. 52 And he did evil in the sight of the Lord , etc.] Which evil was idolatry: and walked in the way of his father ; his father Ahab, who worshipped Baal: and in the way of his mother ; his mother Jezebel, who was still living, and served Baal and Astarte, the deities of her country: and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat ; who set up and worshipped the golden calves: who made Israel to sin ; by the worship of the same, into which he drew them by his example and authority.

Ver. 53 . For he served Baal, and worshipped him , etc.] That is, Ahaziah served him, as his father had done, and his mother still did: and provoked to anger the Lord God of Israel, according to all that his father had done; of which there is an instance in the first chapter of the following book; for falling through a lattice, and becoming sick upon it, he quickly died, having sent messengers to inquire of the god of Ekron whether he should die or not.

FOOTNOTES

-- T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 15. 1. -- Tractat. Theolog. Politic. c. 8. & 9. p. 150, etc. -- Tractatus de Primis 12. Vet. Test. Lib. etc. Londini 1763. -- Vid. Poli Synopsin in loc. -- Antiqu. l. 7. c. 14. sect. 4. -- ythalm "complebo", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; "explebo", Ar. -- μυαῖη "peccatores", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, etc. -- Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 6. fol. 186. 3. -- Vid. Bartenoram in Misn. Celaim, c. 8. sect. 1. -- Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 5. -- T. Bab. Horayot, fol. 12. 1. -- T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 5. 2. -- T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 5. 2. -- Ibid. -- μυαῖη "invitati", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, etc. -- λῆξις "vir virtutis", Montanus, Vatablus. -- Ιθα "nequaquam", V. L. Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. -- Alexander ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 20. -- Vit. Pausan l. 4. c. 4. -- Bereshit Rabba, sect. 96. fol. 83. 3. -- "----- omnes una manet nox, Et calcanda semel via lethi". Horat.

Carmin. l. 1. ode 28. ver. 15, 16. -- λῆξις "[ml "ut prudenter agas", Montanus, Tigurine version; "ut intelligas universa", V. L. -- T. Hieros. Chagigah, fol. 78. 1. -- Anuals, etc. p. 56. -- Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel.

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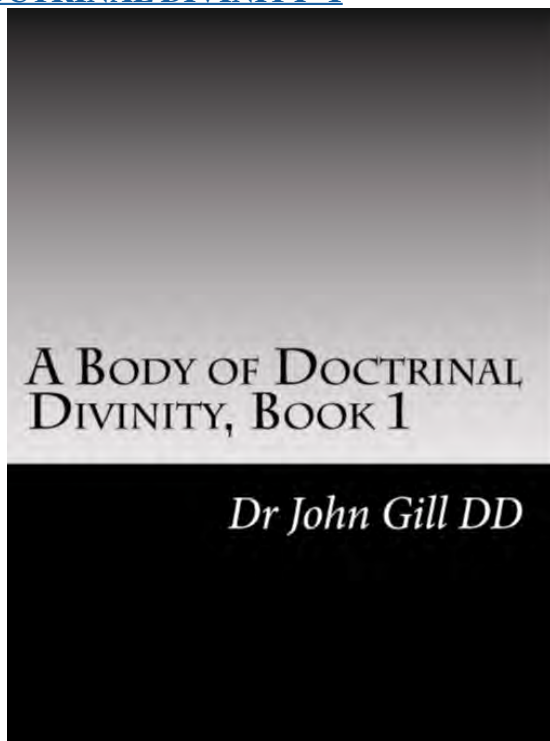
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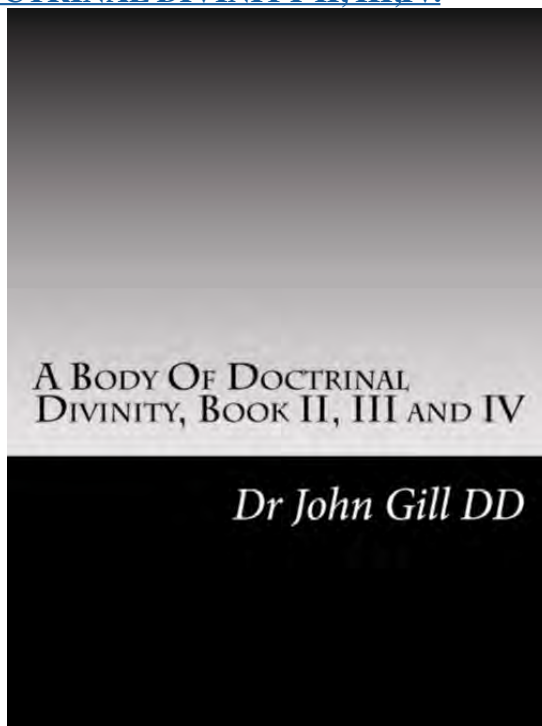
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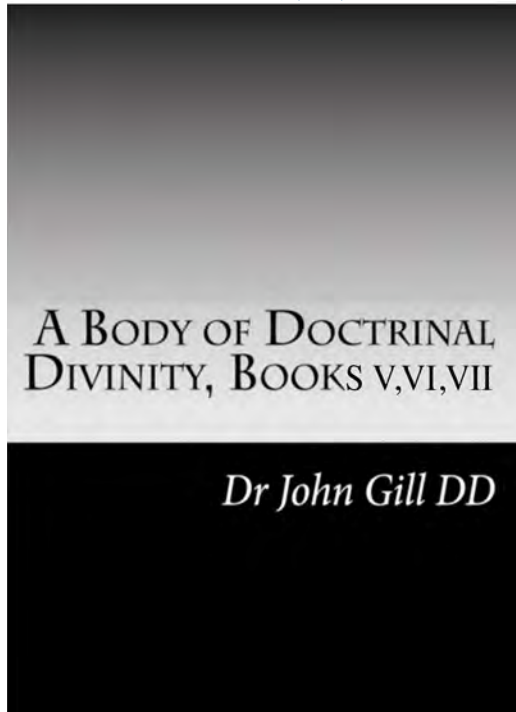
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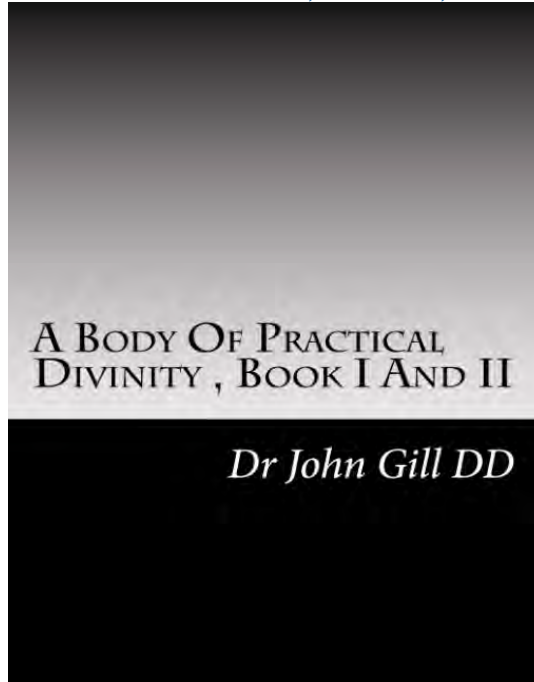
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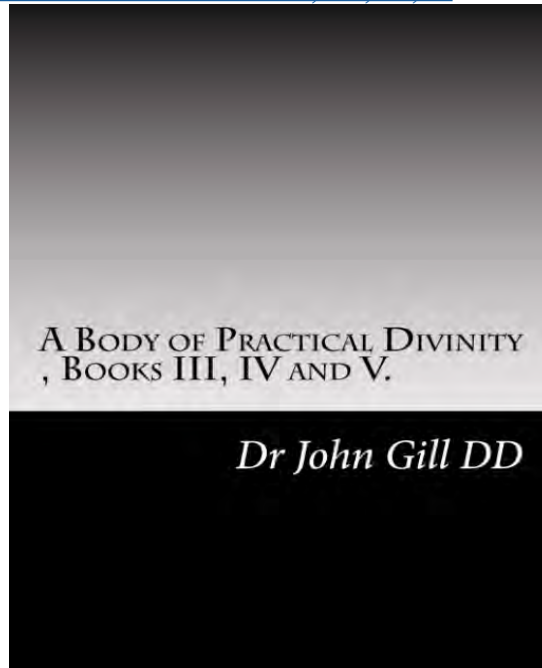
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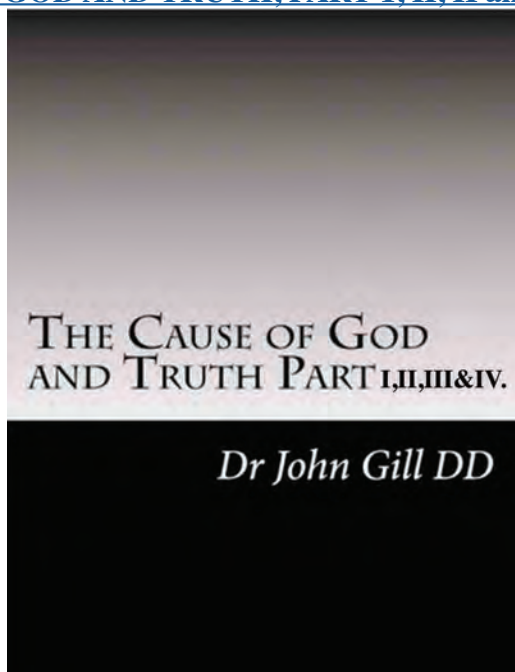
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Romans 8:38, 39.

Ephesians 1:13, 14.

1 Peter 1:5.

1 John 2:19.

1 John 3:9. 87

Isaiah 54:10.

Isaiah 59:21.

Hosea 2:19, 20.

Jeremiah 32:40.

John 14:16.

John 10:28.

1 Corinthians 1:8, 9.

The following work was undertaken and begun about the year 1733 or 1734, at which time Dr. Whitby's Discourse on the Five Points was reprinting, judged to be a masterpiece on the subject, in the English tongue, and accounted an unanswerable one; and it was almost in the mouth of every one, as an objection to the Calvinists, Why do not ye answer Dr. Whitby? Induced hereby, I determined to give it another reading, and found myself inclined to answer it, and thought this was a very proper and seasonable time to engage in such a work.

In the year 1735, the First Part of this work was published, in which are considered the several passages of Scripture made use of by Dr. Whitby and others in favour of the Universal Scheme, and against the Calvinistical Scheme, in which their arguments and objections are answered, and the several passages set in a just and proper light. These, and what are contained in the following Part in favour of the Particular Scheme, are extracted from Sermons delivered in a Wednesday evening's lecture.

The Second Part was published in the year 1736, in which the several passages of Scripture in favour of special and distinguishing grace, and the arguments from them, are vindicated from the exceptions of the Arminians, and particularly from Dr. Whitby, and a reply made to answers and objections to them.

The Third Part was published in 1737.

Part IV

It should be known by the reader, that the following work was undertaken and begun about the year 1733 or 1734, at which time Dr. Whitby's Discourse on the Five Points was reprinting, judged to be a masterpiece on the subject, in the English tongue, and accounted an unanswerable one ; and it was almost in the mouth of every one, as an objection to the Calvinists, Why do not ye answer Dr. Whitby ? Induced hereby, I determined to give it another reading, and found myself inclined to answer it, and thought this was a very proper and seasonable time to engage in such a work.

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The Third Part was published in 1737, and is a confutation of the arguments from reason used by the Arminians, and particularly by Dr. Whitby, against the above doctrines ; and a vindication of such as proceed on rational accounts in favour of them, in which it appears that they are no more disagreeable to right reason than to divine revelation ; to the latter of which the greatest deference should be paid, though the Rationalists of our age too much neglect it, and have almost quitted it ; but to the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them.

In this part of the work is considered the agreement of the sentiments of Mr. Hobbes and the Stoic philosophers with those of the Calvinists, in which the difference between them is observed, and the calumny removed ; to which is added, a Defence of the Objections to the Universal Scheme, taken from the prescience and the providence of God, and the case of the Heathens.

The Fourth Part was published in 1738, in which the sense of the ancient writers of the Christian Church, before the times of Austin, is given ; the importance and consequence of which is shown, and that the Arminians have very little reason to triumph on that account.

This work was published at a time when the nation was greatly alarmed with the growth of Popery, and several learned gentlemen were employed in preaching against some particular points of it ; but the author of this work was of opinion, that the increase of Popery was greatly owing to the Pelagianism, Arminianism, and other supposed rational schemes men run into, contrary to divine revelation, This was the sense of our fathers in the last century, and therefore joined these and Popery together in their religious grievances they were desirous of having redressed ; and indeed, instead of lopping off the branches of Popery, the axe should be laid to the root of the tree, Arminianism and Pelagianism, the very life and soul of Popery.

This is Part 4 of 4 parts, and a new edition, with some alterations and improvements, is now published by request.

This work contains:

Chapter 1 Of Predestination

Chapter 2 Of Redemption

Chapter 3 Or Original Sin

Chapter 4 Of Efficacious Grace

Chapter 5 Of Perseverance

Chapter 6 Of The Heathens

A Vindication of The Cause of God and Truth

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